16
APRIL 1988

NEW TIMES

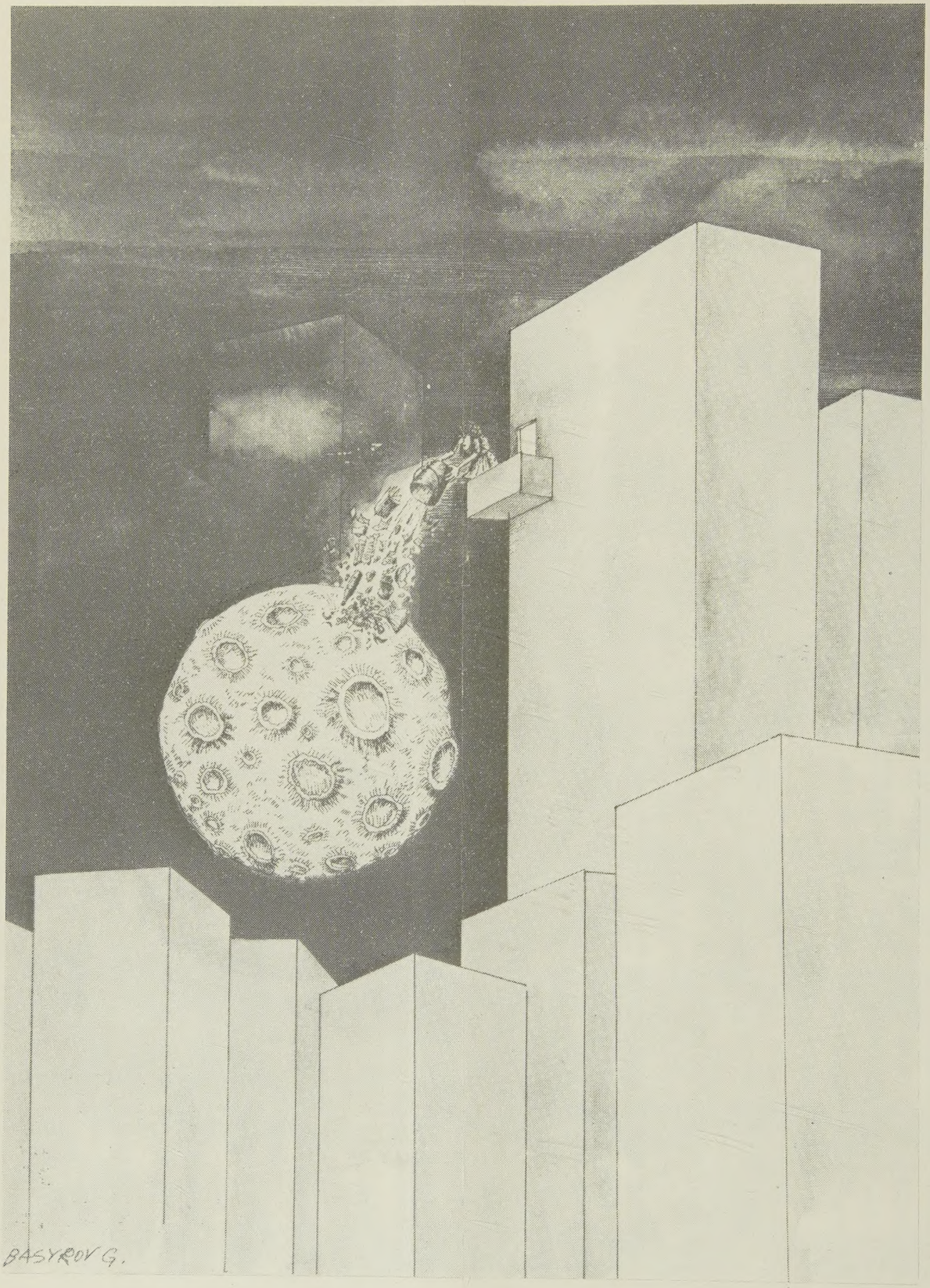
A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NORTHERN IRELAND:
PEOPLE AND BULLETS

1968: 20 years after the "youth revolt"

Albert Einstein:

An unpublished letter to New Times



Drawing by Garif Basyrov

NEW TIMES

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WILLY BRANDT:
I don't imagine my life without politics.

MARGARET PAPANDREOU:
We women, as a rule, remain outside affairs.

YASSER ARAFAT:
The uprising will continue!

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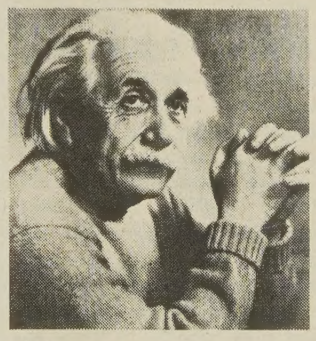

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Cover
by Vladimir Pchelkin

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OPINIONS

HEINZ HAGEMANN
Bielefeld, F.R.G.

■ In issue No. 1/88 I read Leonid Ionin's article "A postcard from Bielefeld," in which he recalls our talks about the future of Russia and Germany and how to promote mutual understanding. I ask you to publish my reply to him.

"Dear Leonid, I'm typing this letter to make it easier for you to read, though I'd like to write it by hand, as a handwritten one would better convey my feelings. We all heartily thank you for the article 'A Postcard from Bielefeld.'

"We understand that it was not easy for you to enter into friendly relations with us, and therefore we are especially grateful to you for having preserved kind memories of us.

"Your father, who died in 1983 from wartime wounds, and I fought on the same sector of the front near Orel, where I was seriously wounded. Does this not lay a special responsibility on us? It was not by chance that we met. Fate willed it. The war brought great misfortune to our two countries, but I deeply regret that your country and the Soviet people suffered so much because of us.

"Over forty years have passed since then. It is time to find a path to reconciliation, understanding and friendship. We are living in a different time, and I agree that our planet is too small to perpetually lay claims to each other. You were right in saying that as soon as everyone realizes this, the past will no longer stand between people. We were glad to read of your sincere feelings towards us. You may be certain that I'll spare no effort to ensure that our peoples live in peace and friendship.

"People-to-people diplomacy is being born and established in our time.

"You quoted the Soviet woman diplomat, Alexandra Kollontai, as saying: 'A diplomat who has not given his country new friends has failed in his line of duty.' You have acquired many new friends for your homeland. I often read the work of the great Russian writers Pushkin, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. We have also discovered Soviet literature for ourselves. It is thanks to you, Leonid, that we have come to know your country well.

"In your article you reminded me of my promise to invite Soviet schoolchildren to my home. Thank you for doing so. On March 1, I asked the Soviet embassy in Bonn to allow a couple of children from the Soviet Union to spend four weeks with my family in order to expand ties between young people in both countries. I'll be happy to make my contribution to the strengthening of friendship between our peoples.

"Please come again. Don't forget that I won't last long, and I'd like to see you again."

HERMANN EINKEMMER
Innsbruck, Austria

■ I have read the newspapers carefully over the last few years. My conclusion is that only the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are putting forward confidence-building and disarmament measures that compel Western governments to enter into negotiations. An agreement has been concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States, and I'm sure that other steps will soon follow.

The peace movement has made its contribution to this process too. More and more Austrians understand that real disarmament must begin. That is why a certain reorientation of the peace movement is taking place, and new ways of campaigning are being sought. I ask you to support this process.

AN INQUIRING LETTER

A. RYVLIN
Leningrad, U.S.S.R.

■ The leaders of a number of informal organizations such as Memory and the Motherland have been given good dressing-downs in many of our periodicals. Tape recordings of their lectures are being disseminated, throughout the country. What they say is not simply preposterous. It is malevolent propaganda. Their diatribes against the Zionist conspiracy, aspersions on many outstanding economic executives, and calls for racial hatred are not democracy but plain fascism. Is there any room for nationalism and fascism in our society?

V. SMIRNOV
Svobodny, Amur Region, U.S.S.R.

■ In a recent issue of New Times I read an article about the wonderful educationist Anton Makarenko. Though many years have passed since he elaborated the basic principles of Soviet pedagogics, we return to his legacy again and again. It is, of course, necessary to do so. There is one disturbing thing, however. Only a fraction of the legacy left to us by Makarenko and other outstanding educationists as, for instance, Sukhomlinsky, has been put into practice.

Innovative teachers encounter bureaucratic obstacles everywhere, though they are developing Makarenko's ideas and introducing new and original methods of education. Why are we merely recalling the times when such outstanding people as Makarenko worked? It is high time we passed from words to actions, as we have been urged to do by the meeting of the Party's Central Committee held to discuss problems of education.

IGOR STOLYAROV
Odessa, U.S.S.R.

■ I have not the slightest hope that my letter will be published. Nevertheless, I have decided to write it—let the editorial staff consider my suggestion.

A number of our writers have emigrated in the past. Some defected from this country when it needed them most. But others were literally forced to leave. Living in other countries, many of them have not said a word that is detrimental to our state. Why are their names still under a ban and their works not published? I think their works belong to Russian culture notwithstanding, and the Soviet people should have the opportunity to read them.

ARNULF HALGREN
Oslo, Norway

■ For many years Moscow and Washington have been talking about the need for arms control, and reproaching each other for failure to take a realistic approach to world problems, mistrust and even hostility. Both sides have now recognized the need for new thinking, and agreed that the disarmament process is unavoidable and arms control necessary.

There seemed to be complete unanimity. What else could be desired? Regrettably, it now appears (such is the opinion of both sides) that it is technically very difficult to effect control, and that a lot of time will be needed and a thorough development of the technology required. Doesn't this remind you of playing cat-and-mouse? Or perhaps, while reproaching each other, the parties concerned were not thinking about ways and means of arms control?

GLASNOST
FROM OUR MAILBAG

YOUR COMMENTS INVITED

RENE HÄGI
Hochfelden, Switzerland

■ There is a view widespread in the West, in my country included, that you have embarked on perestroika because of the weakness of socialism and that your society will be enfeebled by this new policy. The second argument is based on the assumption that socialism has always been a "closed" society and that it must remain such if it wants to survive. Otherwise each "breach" will create centrifugal forces, and these will ultimately break the "system of repression" on which your policy rests. The numerous press comments on the events in Armenia and Azerbaijan have followed just this line of reasoning.

The moment of truth has come for Gorbachev, Western newspapers write. He has been caught in the dilemma created by past mistakes which cannot be remedied under the present state of affairs. Tsarism enslaved one people after another, and the Soviets continued this policy unchanged. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have up to now been the best known examples of such a policy. Armenia and Azerbaijan have now been added to the list. There appear to have been no revolution, Leninist nationalities policy, or voluntary union of Soviet republics.

All this is surprising to me, to say the least. No Soviet leader denies that grave mistakes have been made in the nationalities policy of your state. It is, however, simply amoral to misrepresent events as crudely as our newspapers do. I think Western historiography needs to be revised immediately.

Here is one further instance of similar reasoning and conslusions: either Gorbachev will yield to the Armenians' demands, and then all the other peoples of the Soviet Union will start to advance their claims (though I don't understand what is meant by this word) or he will resort to repression, and then people in the Soviet Union and round the world will lose faith in perestroika. There is no other option. This is the only alternative for your government.

I would like to tell the Soviet people that the world is now testing your ability to take responsible action, because not only the government but also the people should prove their maturity and readiness for new thinking. I want to warn you of this, as, along with the obviously justified demand to see mistakes in nationalities policy corrected, nationalistic and separatist claims could be advanced.

In my opinion, perestroika has arisen not just from the need for reforms but also from confidence that these reforms can be carried out, from belief in the people and their strength. Personally, I am sure that your country's new policy will gradually solve all the problems capitalism has been unable to cope with, and this will be an instructive lesson for the West. Among these problems is that of relations between nationalities in the Soviet Union, which is being artificially played up in the West and which now affects the world on a much wider scale than before.

It seems to me that resolving the problem of Nagorny Karabakh will enrich the experience of mankind. True, the realities of socialism over the past few decades have put its ideals in question. It is necessary for the ideals to create new realities.

Afanasi PAPAKHRISTOS
Salonika, Greece

■ I'm a Greek by birth, but my parents and I lived in Tashkent, in the Soviet Union, for a long time. So I know your country well. The following circumstance has impelled me to write this letter. Reading New Times and other Soviet periodicals, I often come across the expression: "The Russians and Americans are very much alike." In my opinion, this is either naivety or self-deception. How can two peoples be alike if their social systems are different? I think the American and Soviet peoples cannot even be compared from the standpoint of intellectual values or psychology. You are like two pages of a book: they are identical, but their content is different.

I want to see closer ties and better understanding between the American and Soviet peoples. But so far this is problematic.

AN ARTIST'S COMMENT

Drawing by Nikolai Shcherbakov

PRIVATE OPINION

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

ZBIGNIEW MESSNER, Chairman, Council of Ministers, Polish People's Republic

The highlight of the week? Why, certainly my working visit to the U.S.S.R. on April 5-6.

In fact, everything about the visit was of importance: the detailed and businesslike talks with Nikolai Ryzhkov which passed off in an atmosphere of frankness, respectful mutual understanding and constructive exchanges of opinion; and a programme for the development of Poland's atomic power industry over the period of up to the year 2000, which is very important to our economy and which is to be carried out with Soviet assistance.

On the morning of April 6 I was received by Mikhail Gorbachev. In a talk which lasted for over an hour, he praised the dynamics, new content and new forms of our bilateral relations, which give us grounds for speaking of a new and higher level of Polish-Soviet cooperation. He was perfectly frank about the difficulties standing in the way of economic reforms, confident and optimistic about the irreversible character of perestroika and prospects for our relations. Their successful development is a result of the coincidence of the cardinal interests of the U.S.S.R. and the P.P.R., the identity of views of the PUWP and the CPSU on today's problems.

We Poles and our party and government leadership attach enormous importance to Mikhail Gorbachev's forthcoming visit to our country.

LAWRENCE LYONHARDT, Executive Director, Project for Planetary Peace organization (U.S.A.)

On this visit to Moscow my colleagues and I are trying to translate into practice the project conceived at the Soviet-American conference "New Thinking in the Nuclear Age" held this February. We decided to establish the Soviet-American organization Global Management Institute.

If we work in such an institute together, we shall be able to create an enormous potential of benefit to the whole world. Initially, the institute would be an instrument for Soviet-American exchanges of experience in the field of management and efficiency engineering. Soviet managers would come to the U.S. for talks and to pool the experience and Americans would go to the U.S.S.R.

One of the objectives of Global Management Institute is to back the perestroika now under way in the U.S.S.R. It seems to me that if all your objectives are attained, Soviet workers and engineers – especially those engaged in cooperatives – will come to enjoy much more creative freedom than their colleagues in the United States.

YURI POLYAKOV, Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences

For me as a historian, the past week stood out in that it saw a wealth of publications that laid strong emphasis on historical problems. Worthy of special mention is the extremely challenging and profound article, "The Principles of Perestroika: Revolutionary Thinking and Action," which appeared in Pravda. Other critical press comments on Nina Andreyeva's article (carried by Sovetskaya Rossia on March 13) are consonant with what Pravda has to say. Last week's publications were a concentrated expression of the unprecedented importance history has been acquiring in our society over the past few months. The fact that the media are now giving so much space to various aspects of the past is not merely of historiographic interest – it is a social phenomenon of sorts, a characteristic feature of the present stage of our development.

Now we can see with our own eyes how the past and the present correlate, and identify the points of contact – and the painful conflict – between them.

The revolutionizing of thinking has now become the key element of perestroika in general, and history is one of the main points of departure in the formation of the new thinking. I believe there is much more to the current discussions than might appear at a first glance. Some of the debaters would rather forget all about the year 1937; for others, the year 1937 has overshadowed the year 1917; some oppose perestroika; others regard perestroika not as a means of making the most of the potential of socialism, but as a way of overcoming our difficulties outside the framework of socialism; some are interested in preserving rigid patterns of thinking; others have been utterly confused by open polemics they are unaccustomed to.

Under the circumstances, the most important thing is to take a scientific and sensible approach. There is no going back to dogmatism, and alarmist tendencies should be discouraged. Now is the time to display revolutionary audacity, shatter stereotypes and engage in innovative creative exploration. Renunciation of old clichés and the formation of a new mentality will not come easy or overnight. Disputes over problems of history corroborate this truth. Today history is a sensitive nerve of perestroika. Historical experience will be of great help to us in working for our common cause.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Najibullah in Tashkent: a new stage in Soviet-Afghan relations.

TASS photo

The boys are coming home soon

The long years of Afghan-Pakistani negotiations in Geneva are at last drawing to a close, thanks to the constructive and persistent mediating efforts of Diego Cordovez, the personal representative of the U.N. Secretary-General, and thanks too to the combined efforts of other countries. It was a terribly difficult job to find a political settlement to the problems around Afghanistan—the most complex and painful of the world's regional conflicts.

When this issue of the magazine reaches its readers, all the indications are that the long-awaited event will have already taken place. The documents known as the "Geneva package" will have been signed. What does this package consist of? Two agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan: on the principles of relations between them, with non-interference in each other's internal affairs at the top of the list, and on the voluntary return home of Afghan refugees. Then a declaration on international guarantees by the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., as well as a document on the establishment and operation of a U.N. mechanism to control the observance of the undertakings assumed by the sides.

What was it that made agreement possible on a settlement of the protracted Afghan problem? Personally, I think the answer is obvious: the new political thinking, the realization of the justice of the truism that any conflict situation or dispute can and must be resolved solely by political and diplomatic means, and not by force of arms.

It was two years ago, at the 27th CPSU Congress, that the question of withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan was raised. In Afghanistan itself, the new thinking took the form of the policy of national reconciliation launched by the Afghan leadership at the beginning of last year. This policy was aimed at stopping the fratricidal bloodshed and achieving the national reconciliation of all Afghans, irrespective of their views. It was a policy envisaging dialogue and compromise, coalition with opposition and the sharing of power with it.

All this required political courage.

A strong impulse was needed to translate the long-drawn-out negotiations in Geneva into practical decisions.

This impulse was provided on February 8, when Moscow and Kabul simultaneously announced that it had been agreed that Soviet troops would start their withdrawal on May 15 and complete it by a mutually acceptable deadline (nine months was the time agreed on). All that remained was to sign the package of documents on which agreement had effectively been reached in the two months before the date set. But when the Geneva talks resumed on March 2, all sorts for obstacles again began to be erected. At first Islamabad tried to get the composition of a coalition government in Kabul determined in advance, although that is the internal and sovereign concern of the Afghan people themselves. Then it decided to exploit the occasion to delineate the Afghan-Pakistani border — something on which no agreement had been possible for decades. Meanwhile, from the other side of the Atlantic, the question of symmetry in Soviet military aid to Afghanistan and U.S. aid to the opposition forces was raised...

Intensive new diplomatic efforts, constructive joint efforts were thus required from all concerned to reach a settlement in order to remove all the obstacles and complete the Geneva process.

At the final stage a personal meeting took place in Tashkent, on April 7, between Mikhail Gorbachev and President of Afghanistan Najibullah. The 8 points of their Tashkent statement testify that the principled positions of Moscow and Kabul coincide. The withdrawal of Soviet troops, as earlier agreed, will start on May 15. The Soviet Union, which has long traditions of friendship with Afghanistan, will help it to restore its economy, while promoting its economic and social development and helping provide the material conditions for the return of Afghan refugees. Such aid is already being given.

What will Afghanistan be like? It will be what the Afghans themselves want it to be. A pluralist state, with a mixed economy. In the field of foreign affairs it will be independent, non-aligned and neutral. And the territory of the country will not be used for purposes hostile to its neighbours.

The conclusion of the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan is a long-awaited victory for common sense and good will. Now this historic chance has to be seized and realized. It is necessary to ensure in practice the normalization of the situation in the region and establish real peace and calm in long-suffering Afghanistan. No extremist forces must be allowed to prevent this.

One last word to the parents of Soviet soldiers who are still fulfilling their internationalist mission in Afghanistan. Just a little bit more courage and patience. Your sons will return home in not more than 270 days as from May 15. We are all awaiting them. Those who in the past lost their lives there will always be remembered. We all are greatly indebted to them.

ALEXANDER USVATOV

EXCLUSIVE FOR NEW TIMES

"My principle: hope"

When Willy Brandt courteously agreed to receive New Times political analyst Lev Bezymensky, we the magazine's editors thought to ourselves that we had long been in debt to our readership, that though we wrote extensively about politics, we paid little attention to the actual policy makers. Though when all is said and done, these are people who have their own origins, their own proclivities, and their own passions.

Precisely for that reason we decided to put our questions to Herr Brandt somewhat differently than is usual in an ordinary political interview. When he learned what we wanted, he grinned: "You want me to talk in the spirit of glasnost, you say? Alright, then."

Willy Brandt, president of the Socialist International and honorary chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, was in Moscow from April 4 to 6. He was accompanied by prominent figures in the international social democratic movement – Jan Pronk, deputy chairman of the Dutch Labour Party, and Egon Bahr, a member of the executive of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. They met with Soviet Party and government leaders to discuss key world political issues. Both parties declared that despite ideological differences the talks had helped them gain a better understanding of their common responsibility for the destiny of Europe and the world.

– So, Willy Brandt, the man and the politician. We would like to hear what Willy Brandt has to say about that.

– Where shall we begin?

– Let's begin at the beginning. What are Willy Brandt's roots and origins?

– You would like to know about my origins? I was born straight into the working-class movement which, of course, was not of my own doing, but my destiny, undoubtedly a kind one. I have had links with the traditions of the working-class movement, and its spiritual and moral incentives from infancy. Next, I am of the generation, for whom the struggle against fascism, the rallying cry "This must never happen again!" was the focus of their lives.

Hence, it was only logical for me to show special interest in everything associated with preserving peace. From the concept of solidarity that has long been

part and parcel of the working-class movement, I drew the conclusion that it was essential to extend this concept to embrace the entire world. That means we simply cannot turn away when at this very moment children are dying somewhere, dying on this earth of ours, which objectively speaking, is capable of feeding every single human being.

– Can we tell our readers why your real name is not Willy Brandt?

– Certainly. My name was that of my unmarried mother, who was 19 when I was born. But when I left Hitler's Germany, I took on an alias, common enough at the time, and ever since have been known as Willy Brandt. Indeed, when I returned to Germany after the war I told myself that from the age of 20 I had lived and worked with this name, which had become part of myself. I did not want to give up what I had taken into the political arena.

– Did this name have any special meaning for you?

– Not at all. It was sheer expediency to choose a name that would be common enough in Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon countries not to attract undue attention.

– What did exile mean to you? Was it a time of waiting? Or of trial? Or of struggle?

– Of struggle, too, of course. But just pause to consider, when I left I was very young, for which reason I cannot even speak of exile in its usual sense. I simply integrated into this new world, though it was not all that strange to me. I became partly Scandinavian, even spoke Norwegian and Swedish better than German.

– And still do?

– Yes. When one leaves one's country at such a tender age, even chance can play a crucial role in one's further destiny. What happened was that the nazis stripped me of citizenship and robbed me of my country. When the war ended I was invited to join the Norwegian diplomatic service. I accepted the offer for a short while, and no doubt could have made a career of it. When the Economic Commission for Europe was set up in Geneva within the framework of the U.N., the Swedish Professor Gunnar Myrdal, its first chairman, offered me a job on his staff. That was sometime in 1946 or 1947. I might well still be working in some international organization today had I accepted.

What tormented me throughout my time in exile was how long Hitler would rule. At the outset we hoped he would not last long, that no war would be needed to get rid of him. In that sense I was obliged to think constantly of the future.

– Do you mean that the famous "principle of hope" was all-decisive for you?

– Yes, because when no hope shines, you get nowhere. Though, on the other hand, I think one should not be overly optimistic in politics. One must be hopeful and confident, and believe that what is rational and sensible will be a reality. Without that one gets nowhere.

– Do you continue to hold to that principle?

– Unquestionably.

– What do you regard as your greatest political achievement?

– I would think I have helped link my country's name once again with the concept of peace. For a long time this was not at all something we could take for granted. It happened only after relations with the countries hardest hit by the nazi war had been rethought, which is what I contributed to. This implied the normalization of relations with the Soviet Union, with People's Poland and Czechoslovakia, and between the two Germanies. I was not alone in all this of course. Many were involved, but I also did my bit. That I would say is my most important achievement.

– What then was your worst defeat?

A long sustained pause.

– Is that an indiscreet question?

– I suffered many great disappointments. And I made mistakes too. They are with me. But I cannot see myself as having suffered any political defeats after the war.

– Can you imagine life without politics?

– (Laughing.) It all depends on what you understand as politics. Of course, I can imagine myself not shouldering too much of a burden in the evening of my life. In my present capacity as my party's honorary chairman I need not, for instance, attend many meetings. Now I can devote more time to reading and reflection, that is, more than before. Which in turn enables me to take a broader approach to politics! Today I can preoccupy myself with history to a greater extent than with current politics. Generally speaking, all my life I have tried to do a little reading, at least a few pages, every day, whenever I had the slightest opportunity to do so.

So, if one understands politics in the wide sense, as historical reflection and development, then I cannot imagine myself outside of politics. After all, it would be silly just to potter around in the garden in my advanced years.

– Are you an avid reader?

– Certainly.

– Any hobbies?

– I have no time for them. Well, I have mentioned reading, but whenever I have the chance to get away for a longer time, I go to a small village in Southern France and work in the garden there.

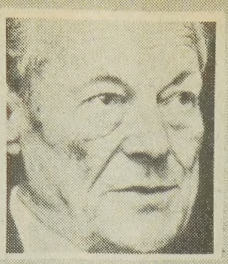
– What about your house on the Rhine?

– No, not there.

– How do you draft your speeches?

– Of course, when one is in high office, one can't dispense with a speech writer. But the times were few and far between when I didn't rewrite the whole text. On the other hand, I now write my own speeches.

True, there are exceptions even now. For instance I am to present a report on the SDPG's 125th anniversary. That adds up to quite a long period. Consequently, I asked three of my friends to jot down a few ideas on the subject. No, I am not



From the biography:

Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm was born in Lübeck on December 19, 1913. His mother worked as an assistant in a small shop. The fatherless boy was brought up by his grandfather, a worker. In 1932 he finished secondary school. By that time he was already a member of the social democratic organization, the Red Falcons, and in 1930 he joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The young man contributed to labour newspapers. After Hitler came to power, Frahm left Germany and lived in Norway and Sweden. In 1938 he was deprived of German citizenship. He took an active part in anti-fascist activity and was in Spain as a journalist during the Spanish civil war.

From the reminiscences:

"During the second world war, together with my friends from different countries, I thought about what we then called peace-time goals. Some were realized, some were rejected, and many remained merely hopes. Today the task is to avert a new war... Last time, as a result of reactionary blindness, historical shortsightedness and dangerous delusions, much of Europe was devastated, and other parts of the world suffered. Next time, the consequences would be incomparably worse. There is nothing more important than the task of preventing a third world war."

From the reminiscences:

"There is no one truth. This maxim, which I mastered with difficulty, accords with the complexity and variety of the modern world. The world is what it is by virtue of the plurality of opinions, ideals, beliefs and public orders. There are many rooms in a peaceful house."

going to read what they've written. I'll just borrow their ideas.

– But you often speak off the cuff?

– At meetings and rallies, certainly. It's a great advantage not to be pinned down to a written text, but have only a piece of paper before you with the main points. Then you get things across better. You have to look at the people you are addressing, and not at the text. But if you're going to make a responsible speech dealing with matters of principle and complex historical events, then you must write your speech.

– When did you first meet Soviet people?

– In Sweden during the war, when I met journalistic colleagues and diplomats. Those were my first encounters. After the war there were more – in Berlin, and later on, in Bonn. And not with diplomats alone.

– A lot is being said today to the effect that the "enemy image," so common in Western ideas about Soviet people, in your own country as well as elsewhere, is disappearing. What do you think ought to be done for it to vanish completely?

– You know, if we mean my country, the Federal Republic, I would say I have an edge there. In my country there is no "enemy image" as regards the Russians among the public at large. Just consider: according to public opinion polls, Mikhail Gorbachev is today the most popular foreign politician while his book tops the bestseller list.

All that must be assessed in the context of the situation that prevailed before. The immense effort undertaken to reach understanding and develop a positive attitude towards the U.S.S.R. is yielding results. Of course, you do have natural hangovers from the old way of thinking. But they affect the minority. After all, there are some people we cannot remake.

– Do you like to dream?

– Yes, I do, but not for long.

– Would you prefer not to?

– I sometimes think it would be better never to have known what psychoanalysis means.

– I must apologize for putting the question somewhat vaguely. In German "traumen" means both to dream and to see dreams.

– Well, that's what I meant, to see dreams. One is often haunted in one's dreams by things that are associated with the worst in life, with war, with nazism.

– Does the war often haunt you in your dreams?

– I'm afraid it does. But if you mean the other meaning, that is to look to the future and at oneself, to think that many things could be better tomorrow than today, then, provided you don't overdo it, provided you don't fantasize, it is a good thing. Of course, reality immediately brings you back to earth. On the other hand, if you don't dream you won't get anywhere.

– Herr Brandt, I know you should have left for the airport long ago. I'd like to carry on with your talk, but...

– (Laughing.) Thanks for your consideration.

– Thank you, and I hope we shall be able to have another talk.

From the biography:

After the war Willy Brandt returned home as a correspondent for Norwegian newspapers and, later, as a staff member of the Norwegian mission. His German citizenship was restored, and he engaged in political and public activity, becoming a deputy to the West Berlin city assembly in 1950, governing mayor of West Berlin in 1957, a member of the executive of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1958, SDPG chairman (1964-87), Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (1966-69), and Federal Chancellor (1969-74). As Federal Chancellor, Willy Brandt signed the Moscow Treaty (1970) and treaties with Poland, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. In 1971 he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, and in 1976 became president of the Socialist International. He is also honorary chairman of the SDPG.

From Willy Brandt's speech:

"Huge numbers of destructive weapons have been concentrated in Central Europe. This flies in the face of reason and the interests of nations. While others are demonstrating their strength and creating new and dangerous conflicts in this way, we should not respond by whipping up tension."

From the biography – purely personal:

Willy Brandt is married (for the third time), has three sons Mathias, Lars and Peter, and daughter Ninja (the eldest). He likes telling political jokes, and, in the past, liked fun and enjoyed drinking parties. Willy Brandt is an unusually fast reader and has "conservative" tastes in music. His favourite composers are Beethoven, Bach and Grieg.

The interviewer's comment

Is Willy Brandt a man who has achieved his highest aspirations? Is he satisfied? On no account. His every thought is of today, of disarmament, the development of North-South relations, Europe's future, the future of his own party, and of the whole socialist movement. Clearly this is a consequence of his extensive political experience, the accumulated ability to take hurdles.

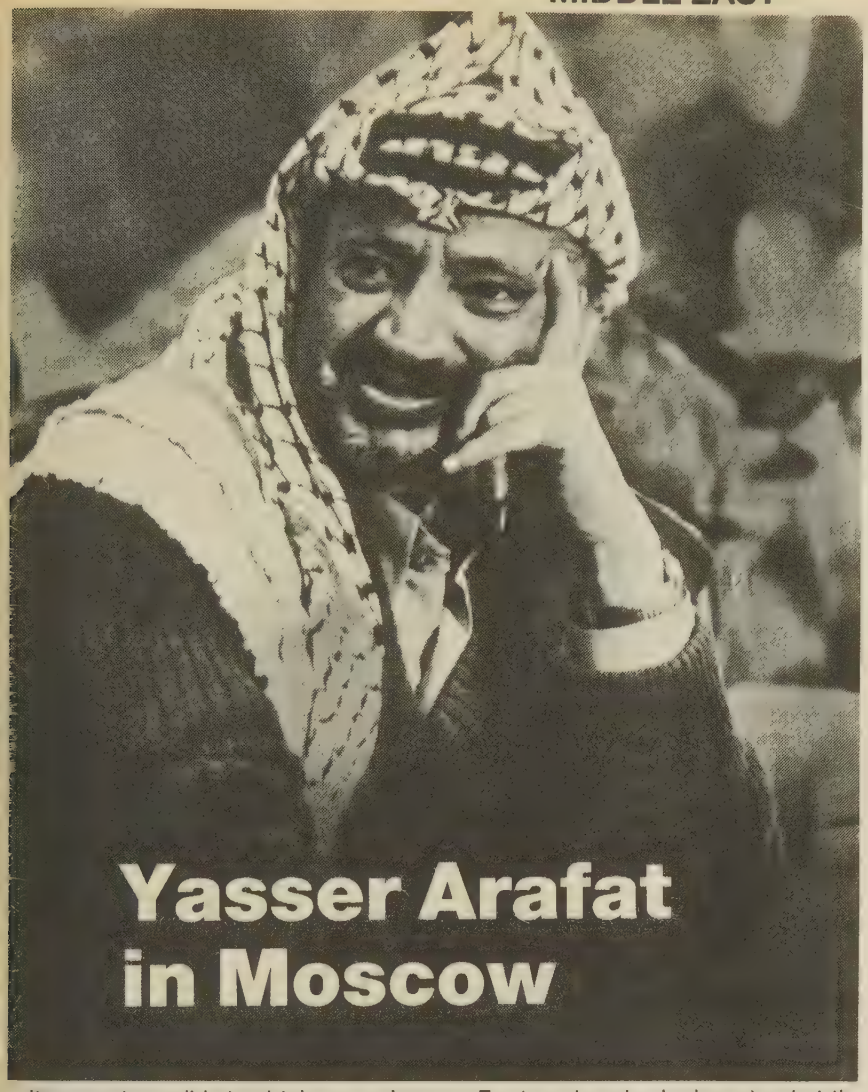
Brandt's political career was no bed of roses. He did not always win applause – far from it – and this applies too to the Soviets during the cold war, when he was the central figure in West Berlin. Twice he unsuccessfully ran for the chancellorship. But when he finally became Federal Chancellor, he was hounded by the right. They screamed when in 1970 Chancellor Brandt bent his knee before the monument to the heroes of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. When he struggled for the "Eastern treaties," he was threatened and vilified. But he continued on his way, the way of a man who puts his faith in the good in human beings, in the possibility of a peaceful future, though sometimes he puts too much faith in good, for which he has more than once been censured.

He was very pleased with his Moscow visit, especially with his conversation with Mikhail Gorbachev, which reaffirmed the possibility of taking new steps forward, including joint moves by the Soviet Communist Party and the parties in the Socialist International, for disarmament, peace in Europe and wider North-South relations. Much was said about perestroika in the U.S.S.R., to which Brandt attaches exceptional importance and wishes every success.

He has changed little over the many years I have known him. He still has his own peculiar manner of speaking, at first slowly, as if not quite aloud, but to himself, followed by an abrupt change with a pinpointed formula. His face changes as abruptly. Sometimes he seems to wear a mask, a poker face, today deeply furrowed; then suddenly it comes alive and there is a spark in his eye.

Amazing, kind, charming. But that is sentimental lyricism, which does not befit a political analyst.

L.B.



Yasser Arafat in Moscow

It was not possible to obtain an exclusive interview for New Times. Mikhail Gorbachev's discussions with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, continued much longer than had been expected. Arafat barely had time to meet newsmen.

Yasser Arafat. He reminds us of the homeless Arab people of Palestine.

He never travels without his pistol (customs authorities in many countries make an exception for him). Loved by five and a half million Palestinian Arabs, he is also hated by many. There have been countless attempts on his life. A friend of his told me that when Yasser Arafat lived in Beirut, he never slept in same place for two nights in succession. He is 59, but has no family. Nor has he a home. Now he is most often to be seen in Baghdad, although the PLO's official headquarters are in Tunis.

Yasser Arafat has another personal weapon that protects him from life's troubles – his optimism and sense of humour.

For two decades he has stood at the head of the PLO, and he has devoted himself entirely to the cause of establishing a Palestinian state. It is a constant quest along a far from straight and often contradictory road, with the choice between a war of liberation and peaceful means of attaining the ultimate goal. Some of the compromises turn out to be unacceptable to PLO members. Sometimes they are the result of sincere misconceptions, at others they stem from despair. The road to unity in the Palestine Resistance movement has been a hard one. But in the Arab world itself, where the Palestine problem should be bringing greater Arab unity, attitudes to the PLO differ....

When Yasser Arafat rose to speak it was obvious that he was in high spirits.

Somebody from the hall asked: "Have you and Gorbachev come up with a new initiative?"

"Even better, much better!" replied Arafat. "We have reached complete understanding."

His talks in Moscow centred on ways of resolving the Middle East crisis and on the holding of an international conference. He naturally spoke of the situation in the occupied territories, where the uprising against Israeli occupation continues.

"The Israelis censor all reports from the occupied territories," he said. "They are trying to minimize the statistics of their crimes. They say just over 100 Arabs have been killed. But here are the real figures!" He pointed to the file he was holding. "This lists by name all the Arabs killed in the rebellion – 278 in all. And this second file lists by name all the wounded and injured. There are more than 7,000. Any of you can take these files and make copies. The number of those arrested totals 16,000. The camps are packed with prisoners, and schools are being turned into prisons. Gas is being used widely against the rebels."

Speaking of the new American Middle East initiative with which the Secretary of State George Shultz is touring the area, Yasser Arafat noted that the prime purpose of his tour was to block the uprising. But the uprising could not be stopped until the Palestinian problem had been resolved once and for all. The Shultz plan did not provide for such a settlement. Moreover, the U.S. refused to recognize the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs – the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"With whom do they intend to build peace on the occupied territories?" asked Yasser Arafat. "With a ghost? All U.N. resolutions provide for the participation of the PLO in any international conference."

Speaking of Israel's mounting isolation in the world community, Yasser Arafat at the same time spoke highly of those forces in Israeli society that support the Palestinian uprising and are demanding an end to the occupation of Arab lands.

Yasser Arafat gave his view of the situation in the Arab world. The period which he described as paralysis with respect to the Palestinian problem had ended.

"As for relations with our Syrian brothers, they have now been straightened out. The Soviet Union has helped to normalize them. And for that we are very grateful to our Soviet friends...

"I should like to say that this visit to the Soviet Union has been one of my most successful ever," declared the PLO leader. "Even the snow seems warm in Moscow, as I always say about our relations."

DMITRY ZGERSKY

Beating missiles into gardening tools?

What a nuclear arms cut would mean to the economy

ALEXEI KIREYEV, Cand. Sc. (Econ.)

Charles Wilson, U.S. Secretary of Defence in the Eisenhower administration, was all out to prove that nuclear weapons guaranteed higher security per unit of cost. This view is echoed by present-day opponents of disarmament, who claim that "cheap" nuclear weapons keep expenditure on conventional forces down, while a reduction in nuclear arms stockpiles would inevitably cause military spending to skyrocket.

A hypothetical situation where nuclear weapons could help save on conventional ones cannot, of course, be excluded. This would be the case if nuclear arms were deployed by one side only. After all, a nuclear warhead worth a million dollars can cause economic damage to the tune of a billion dollars. Whereas a bow and arrow, a sword or a flintlock could take dozens of lives on the battlefield, the killing potential of machine guns, tanks, cannons and light bombers amounts to tens of thousands of lives, and that of nuclear weapons, to billions. From this standpoint, the nuclear monopoly does provide conditions favourable to victory in a military-economic contest.

The United States has long lost its nuclear monopoly, however. What we now have is not merely bilateral, but massive deployment of nuclear weapons. This process is a terrible threat to productive forces, compelling both East and West to increase their armies, develop their military infrastructures, deploy anti-missile defence systems and create increasingly sophisticated conventional weapons suitable for use in a nuclear war. All this, in turn, calls for huge spending on the non-nuclear components of the armed forces, building up a hypertrophied military economy in peacetime. Moreover, the nuclear arms marathon remains a prerogative solely of the five nuclear powers, the rest depending for their defence on conventional tanks, cannons and planes... Incidentally, for all their reliance on the nuclear deterrence "umbrella" in their military doctrines the Western countries attach the utmost importance to conventional arms.

Now that "hawks" like Caspar Weinberger have left the political scene, the American military say they are not linking the ratification of the INF treaty to any preconditions. In the early seventies, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staffs Committee made it perfectly clear that it would support the SALT 1 treaty only if the government sanctioned the production of new-type nuclear weapons such as the B-1 strategic bombers and the Trident submarine-carried ballistic missiles. Similarly, during the debates on the ratification of SALT 2, the Pentagon secured a promise of permission to deploy MX missiles and increase military spending.

Today the situation is different. According to the New York Times, "Senior officers apparently fear that directly tying the Treaty's passage to further arms investments could scuttle it and therefore damage NATO without securing long-sought new weapons."

As we can see, the Nuclear Club is in for hard times. The dollars they invest in the arms buildup are no longer bringing in high political and economic dividends. The richest capitalist country, the first one to have donned nuclear armour, can no longer finance the arms race. Americans have already paid a high price for their politicians' nuclear adventurism. They expect nuclear disarmament, which has just started, to bring them not only greater security but economic benefits as well. Will it justify their hopes?

Do-it-yourself kits

Although the INF treaty covers only four per cent of the world's nuclear arms stockpiles, it is of enormous economic as well as political significance.

In the course of the negotiations on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, the Soviet side insisted on taking the interests of the national economies into account. As a result, the sides decided to use many missile and launching-pad components for civilian purposes. For instance, under the protocol governing missile elimination procedures, all warheads of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles are to be scrapped, but their charging units and homing system elements may be taken out. The total value of the weapon components not subject to destruction comes to over 150 million rubles (for the U.S.S.R.).

The balance of material expenditures and gains involved in implementing the treaty, which is still awaiting ratification, is favourable to the U.S. as well. In December 1987 Congress cancelled allocations for the building of new intermediate- and shorter-range missile-launching pads in a number of West European countries. Allocations for the previously planned deployment of such missiles have been suspended. These moves have saved the nation's budget 111 million dollars.

And this is only the beginning. Scientists say that nuclear warheads can be converted into fuel for atomic reactors. The INF treaty provides for the scrapping of more than 2,000 nuclear warheads containing enough fissile matter (uranium-235 and plutonium) for eight power-generating units of a million KW each. This nuclear fuel can also be burned by icebreaker reactors.

Even the very process of destroying nuclear warheads can be put to practical use. The resultant blast holes can be used for gas and oil storage, and the blasts themselves as a means of increasing the output of oil deposits. In the long run, the "demobbed" atom will come in useful in building geo-thermal electric stations depending for their operation on the earth's internal heat. Consequently, there are ways of eliminating nuclear warheads by making rational use of them.

Other missile components can also be put to practical uses provided that this does not run counter to the treaty. For instance, the Soviet side has not accepted the U.S. suggestion that missile delivery systems be cut along their axes and scrapped. These former delivery systems ought to be reequipped so as to make them unfit to carry missiles. As a result, our civil transport fleet will be replenished with all-weather, cross-country and high-capacity trucks to the value of a total of over 50 million rubles, suitable for transporting, say, large-diameter pipes, power transmission line supports or huge tree trunks.

The West German company Liebherr,

which set up a joint venture in the U.S.S.R. with the Odessa Heavy-Duty Crane Building Amalgamation in January 1988, plans to mount special-purpose telescopic hoists on the SS-20 missile trucks. The hoists will find uses in housing construction, road building, electric power engineering, and in the chemical and oil-refining industries.

The protocol to the treaty states that the launching pads and auxiliary gear of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles are to be rendered unfit for combat use. For instance, stationary and mobile propellant reservoirs are simply removed from launching sites to be converted to peaceful uses.

A missile complete with a launching pad is, in civil terms, a perfect water supply system comprising an elevated water-pressure tank and pumping equipment, which any gardening cooperative would seize with both hands. The automatic systems of missile units could heat public garages or vegetable storages. Finally, many of the dismantled missile components are certain to be popular with do-it-yourself enthusiasts, both adult and teenage. Therefore, a part of the dismantled missiles' cost can be recouped by marketing their components through trading networks or rendering various services to the public.

In the course of implementing the treaty, the problem will certainly arise of converting plants once engaged in manufacturing these missiles to civil production. In the U.S.S.R. these are the Votkinsk Engineering Plant (the Udmurt A.S.S.R.), the Barrikady Plant in Volgograd, the V.I. Lenin Heavy Engineering Plant in Petropavlovsk, and the pilot plant of the M.I. Kalinin Engineering Amalgamation in Sverdlovsk; and in the United States, the Hercules No. 1 Plant in Magna, Utah; Martin-Marietta in Middle River, Maryland; McDonnel Douglas in Titusville, Florida; General Dynamics, Kearny-Mesa, California; Air Force Plant No. 19 in San Diego, California, and the U.S. ground forces' ammunition plant in Longhorn, Marshall, Texas.

The INF treaty does not forbid using the production facilities of the said plants for manufacturing weapons of other kinds. Converting some of these plants to civil production, will involve no problems at all as most of them make civil products as well as weapons anyway. Since the signing of the treaty, word has come from the Votkinsk Engineering plant that an automated conveyor and storage system intended for high-precision programme-controlled machine tools has gone into operation there. Besides, the plant manufactures dairy equipment, power supply systems for drilling rigs and underwater well-sinking control gear, car assemblies and washing machines. The experience gained by such plants in civil production will enable them to convert their production facilities to civil needs within a short time.

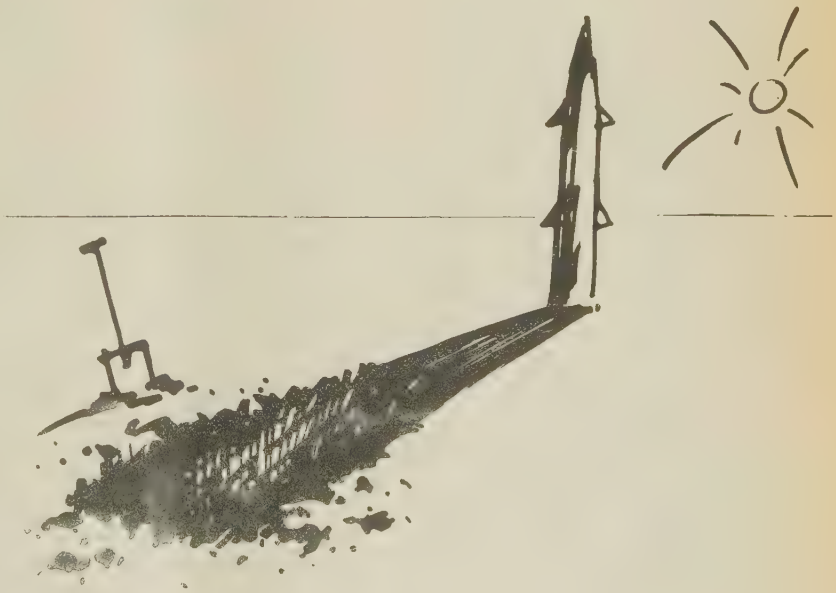
Filling the gaps?

The INF treaty also provides for reequipping intermediate-range missile bases to accommodate missiles not covered by the treaty, provided that the other side is notified in good time about the dates and purpose of such reequipment. This obviates the need to destroy costly equipment and auxiliary facilities. The U.S., for instance, will be able to adapt its Pershing 2 and BGM-109g bases in the F.R.G. to tactical missiles, and the U.S.S.R. is entitled to adapt its intermediate-range missile bases to intercontinental ballistic missiles. One cannot fail to see, though, that while economically rational, this provision is unlikely to benefit either side politically. Instead of being eliminated, the key components of nuclear missiles will merely be geared to other military needs.

A similar situation could arise if the U.S. decides to use the warheads of the missiles now being destroyed in systems not covered by the treaty. The Pentagon has said it intends to mount the Pershing 2 warheads on its new missiles, which are to replace the Lance short-range ones, while the warheads of the ground-based cruise missiles are being transferred to almost identical sea-borne weapons. The use of the warheads made available by the INF treaty will cost the Pentagon an estimated 0.5-1 billion dollars less than making new ones.

Now, if the U.S. decides to compensate for the nuclear missiles earmarked for destruction with other weapons, this will require substantial additional expenses. "Indeed, on the Western side," the newspaper The Financial Times commented, "the INF treaty could lead to a slight increase in defence spending as NATO seeks to fill any gaps left in its flexible deterrent strategy by modernizing its short-range nuclear weapons – and, perhaps, put more resources into conventional defence." Some members of the Nuclear Club are already clamouring for an increase in the number of the sea-borne cruise missiles from 125 to 758 by the mid-1990s, the development of Lance missile substitutes complete with cluster launchers with a range of 120-140 miles; the construction of a tactical anti-missile system capable of suppressing short-range nuclear missiles; the continued production of F-15E fighter planes capable of carrying nuclear weapons, and the conversion of a hundred and fifty B-52 bombers into means of non-nuclear cruise missile delivery.

The Nuclear Club's death merchants are feverishly trying to secure new orders, and convince politicians and the public of the need for them. They realize that the INF treaty opens up the road to a nuclear-free world, and a time when their deadly wares will no longer have a market.



Drawing by Igor Shein

Dividends threatened

This is being brought nearer by active preparations for the next step towards nuclear disarmament – a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive arms (SOA). According to researchers at the Analysis Corporation in Washington, the forthcoming reduction in long-range strategic arms may lead to a 15-20-billion-dollar cutback in American defence spending, a prospect the Nuclear Club does not relish at all. The New York Times: "If Wall Street abhors uncertainty, it ought to be looking with particular unease at the prospects of the military contractors that make billions of dollars from the production of nuclear weapons. Nobody is suggesting that good relations between the superpowers and sharp reduction in nuclear arms are anything but good news. But dispassionate investors are starting to ask how such progress on weapons control will be reflected on corporate balance sheets."

The Nuclear Club certainly has cause for concern: a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive arms will affect a much larger proportion of nuclear facilities, the bulk of which (as distinct from intermediate- and shorter-range missiles) are on the drawing boards, production lines or "shopping lists." The big arms manufacturers have not yet "used up" gold mines like the MX and Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles, strategic bombers, sea- and air-borne cruise missiles, and submarine-carried ballistic missiles. To illustrate this, the Trident 2 programme for the production of submarines and missiles (contracted in 1983) is worth 53.5 billion dollars at current prices; the programme for the production of MX ICBMs (contracted in 1982), 21.6 billion dollars, and the programme for the production of the B-1B bombers (contracted in 1981), 28.2 billion dollars. Coming next is a programme for the production of Midgetman missiles worth 45-70 billion dollars, which haven't yet been contracted for. The research and development work involved in making new-generation means of nuclear arms delivery alone could bring in 200 billion dollars!

The territory of a former Soviet missile base in the German Democratic Republic is to be turned into a recreation zone with holiday home centres. In the meantime,the news is being discussed by journalists.

At our estimate, the freezing of all arms programmes now under negotiations in Geneva, and an end to the further budgetary allocations for the development, production and purchase of strategic offensive weapons, would save the U.S., over the next five years, about 150 billion dollars – only slightly less than this year's expected budget deficit of 165 billion dollars. Halting strategic nuclear arms development and production programmes would mean an impressive saving for the Soviet Union as well.

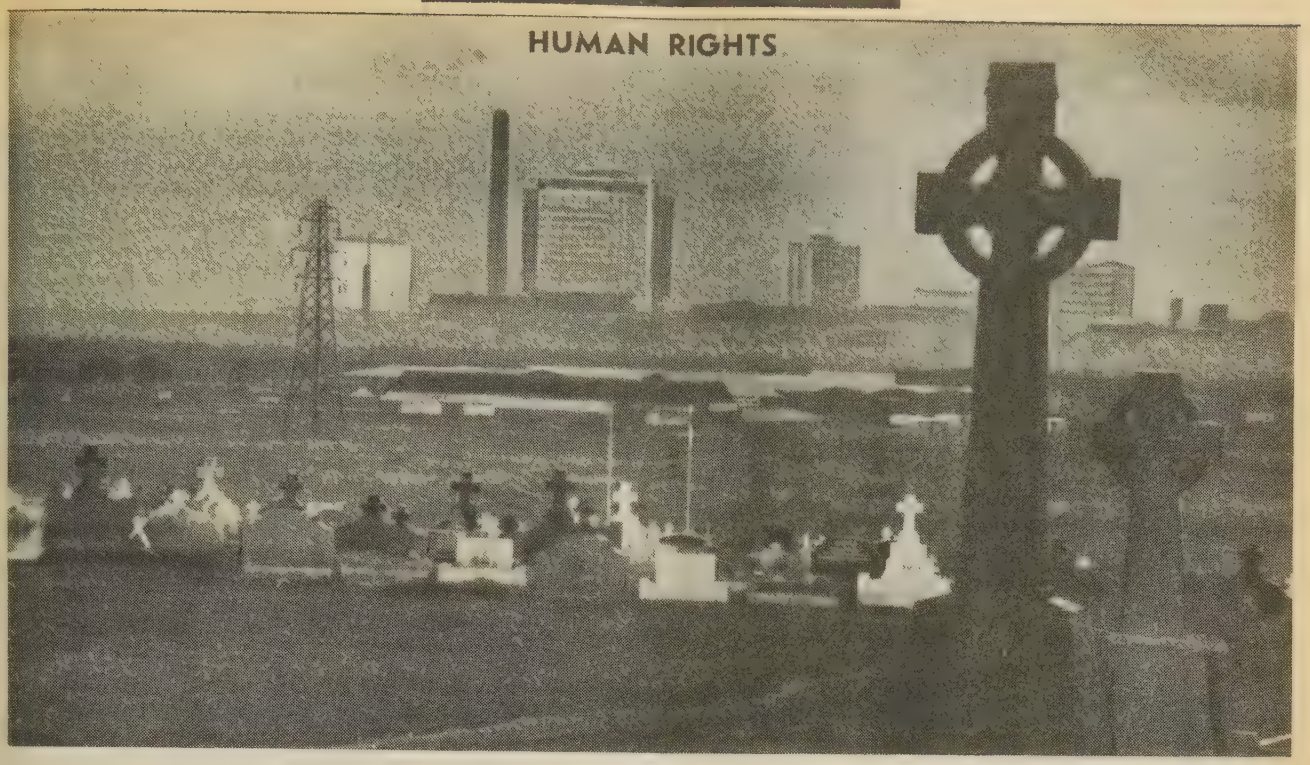
True, a certain proportion of the money saved will have to be spent on eliminating half of the strategic offensive arms and converting munitions factories to civil production.Theoretically, one of the three following situations could ensue: a) the funds released by stopping SOA production and purchasing programmes could exceed the cost of their elimination; b) equal this cost; c) come below this cost with the result that additional outlays will have to be made.

In the first case, the economic effect of the 50 per cent SOA cut is obvious. But what about the other two cases? If savings and expenditures balance each other out, a proportion of military spending will go not into making means of destruction, but into converting them, wherever possible, into products usable for civil purposes. This means that a certain proportion of the military budget will be spent on peaceful needs. As a result, products necessary for the national economy will be made, albeit at expensive cost.

Even if nuclear disarmament incurs extra spending, it will still make sense, because scrapping weapons is usually cheaper than maintaining them. For instance, it costs 24 million dollars to dismantle a nuclear submarine, and 14.5 thousand dollars to scrap a bomber, while maintaining them costs 60 million and 7.3 million dollars respectively. As a result of weapon conversion, society will get products which, for all their high cost, can be put to civil uses. After all, there is not much difference between military and civil transport planes, or between army and civil trucks.

The benefits of the measures to reduce nuclear arms are by no means restricted to their economic effectiveness. The atmosphere of trust in international relations, cannot be estimated in terms of money, and it could make up for many of the chances we have missed to promote economic cooperation. The formation of a new global mentality based on disarmament would give a powerful stimulus to trade, and to scientific and technological exchanges free of the national security and secrecy restrictions that handicap the progress of worldwide economic cooperation today.

ADN–TASS photo



People and bullets

Our special correspondent tells of his meetings in Belfast

"What's wrong with your hand, Ralph?"

I ventured to ask the question although we had only been acquainted for half an hour. During this half hour my ebullient and hospitable host had seated me in front of the fire, given me a cup of hot coffee and told me a great deal about himself and his family. His skipper's beard had been exposed to the winds of many latitudes: he had spent many years as a ship's cook. Sometimes he took along his wife Mary Patricia and his daughters Maureen and Brenda. He was born in England into a Protestant family. Mary is a Catholic. Such marriages are, unfortunately, extremely rare in Northern Ireland.

Ralph Richardson

My host was sitting in his shirtsleeves by the fireside, with his back to the window. His head swivelled at the slightest sound. In reply to my quizzical stare he said, "There's a lot of unrest in Ardoyne, our Catholic ghetto. Recently I heard a shot, I ran out into the street, saw a man in a car calling out to another man. I rushed towards them but twisted my ankle. Later they were arrested: they were the Protestant ultras, and they shot a Catholic neighbour of mine in the head. The other day a house across the street was burnt down. The people managed to escape but their little dog perished in the flames."

Ralph's right arm looked as if it has been scalded from wrist to shoulder, which prompted my question.

"I was saving my arm. When I was young I had it covered with tattoos, mostly calls for freedom, and Republican slogans. People told me, 'Ralph, you'd better be careful, they'll cut your right arm off some day.' And they might have done well. So I had to have an operation. It was quite painful. But at least I've got both my arms, I can do things!" he adds, gesticulating vigorously.

Ralph's black poodle barked. Somebody had approached the house. Ralph turned to the window anxiously. It was Maureen, who had been shopping. We could continue our conversation.

"I have my own accounts with the police," says Ralph. "I've never loved them, especially after what happened in 1978. I was going to Singapore where I was to board my ship. The policeman at the airport frisked me — well, that's all right, everybody's frisked. But he started to ask me questions: age, place of birth and so on. That was none of his business. So I told him, if you're interested look at my passport, you'll find everything there. Asking questions is the business of the clerk at the counter. The policeman got into an ugly mood. He winked at somebody, another policeman rushed towards me and, without saying a word, hit me in the jaw and kicked me twice in the stomach. I had no chance. They tied me up, took me away and threw me into a cell. By the time the policeman came in, I had recovered a bit. I showed him what I could do with my right arm. He would remember it. My joy was short-lived. Five men burst into the cell. They tore off my clothes and beat me up. Shortly afterwards I was put in the dock. I decided to behave as humbly as I could — judges like it — I'd plead guilty on all charges, that might help me. So I kept saying, "Guilty". The sentence came like a bolt from the blue, six months gaol and a 48 pound sterling fine. Before it sank in, I heard, 'the sentence is suspended.' I blurted out, 'Can I write out a check for 48 pound sterling now?' 'Not here!' barked the judge. So, what do you think? They had eight blokes escort me to the bank."

Ralph is an active member of the Irish Communist Party. One of his duties is to sell the party weekly Unity. Although it has always condemned extremist actions, the authorities have never liked it. Ralph learned this to his cost.

"It happened during the hunger strike. Remember the time Bobby Sands and his friends went on hunger strike in jail to press their demands? I was seized in the street, taken to an army barracks and thrown into a cell. They told me to strip and tied my hands behind my back. They forced my mouth open and one of those bullies spat into my throat. When they wanted to arrest me another time, I said, 'You've no right to, I'm selling an officially permitted periodical.' You think they listened to me? They detained me again, they made me strip naked. This time their imagination went so far as to gag me with socks. I was rescued from prison by our party chief, Jimmy Stewart. He stepped in, and wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The official reply was, 'No objections to the sale of your weekly.' Objections or no objections, they had stuck socks in my mouth. Mind you, that wasn't the worst of what they did to me. Once they stuck needles into my feet. One day they put a hood over my head and tied it with string round my neck so that I wouldn't know where I was. And there were questions, questions.

"I can tell you honestly: when they tortured me in police precincts and barracks, when they tried to extract preposterous evidence from me, the one thing that sustained me was my socialist convictions. I am very worried about the future of my country. I've seen a lot in my life and I know that there are places where life is better, where people can walk upright."

Billy Bittles

In the days preceding my trip to Belfast, I watched the TV news in London very attentively. The morning and evening editions began and ended with Northern Ireland. It was natural to have Northern Ireland at the end of the programme (the weather report for the United Kingdom usually ends with information on the winds blowing over Ulster), but unfortunately, Northern Ireland opened the news bulletins too. Shootings, killings, retaliation, fresh acts of violence. More victims. Terrorism. Strife. Tragedy.

It was sunny in Ulster: after the London jams, the road from the airport seemed free of traffic and I drove fast. The scene around was a green paradise. Rolling downs, peace, chirping birds. The brakes screeched, and the idyll vanished. There were two earthern barriers running across the road. Both painted yellow as a warning. It was a checkpoint. The policeman checked suspicious cars. The obstacles are impossible to drive over at high speed.

Later, going for long walks in Belfast in the company of my constant companion, Billy Bittles, I often, especially initially, found myself beguiled into a sense of tranquility by the green lawns which are all over the city. But 20-year-old Billy, who knows the city like the palm of his hand, brought me back to harsh reality. "See those boarded-up windows? A bomb went off here recently." This was in the city's principal street. Further from the centre, especially in the western and northern districts, the picture was depressing. In a street inhabited by Protestants, all the ground-floor windows are bricked up: people were tired of replacing windows. In Catholic areas, you see burnt-out cars here and there. In many places we had to make a detour around massive walls dividing the city. The same end is served by tall metal fences with spikes on top. The walls are daubed with slogans and graffitti. In the Catholic neighbourhoods they praise the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and call for armed struggle. In Protestant areas they praise the Ulster Defence Association, call for eternal union with England and threaten everyone opposed to union.

I pause to take pictures of the more dramatic evidence of the recent clashes

Catholic quarter.

Playground hemmed in by a barricade of burnt-out vehicles.

— burnt-out cars, smashed windows, fragments of brick. From the obscurity of a dingy house with a notice, "This place is crawling with roaches" emerges a teenage boy with a scratched face.

"Mister, three pounds, and the plastic bullet is yours," he says in a tone verging on demand. He produces a hard white cylinder about a foot long — such bullets are used by police to control riots.

Billy lingers to exchange a few remarks with the enterprising lad, then catches up with me.

"Says there won't be any clashes today."

"How does he know?"

"Everybody knows about these things here."

Billy is unemployed, lives on the dole.

His father is a driver. "He works a 70-hour week. Wouldn't live to see the other side of fifty-five: who could survive such sweated labour?" Billy says these chilling words calmly. His mother also earns money. She works in a café. But there are four small children to feed.

As we walk along, grey police and army vehicles pass us. They have heavy aprons front and rear to prevent "foreign bodies," especially explosive ones, getting under the wheels. The flashlight on the roof is shielded by wire netting. Every now and again we see soldiers stop and search cars. First they study the driver's papers, then open the bonnet and boot. "Can I take pictures of them?" I ask Billy.

"Yes. Only we may be arrested. They'll let you go when they know you're a journalist. But they'll beat me up and keep me in detention for about a week."

"Have you had such experiences?"

"Yes, lots. When I was a kid I didn't give a damn about anyone. I talked back to policeman. So once they got me. Put me in their van, took me to a Protestant quarter and threw me out where the skinheads hang out — they are fascists actually. I made the best use of my feet. They would've killed me. The policemen told them I had links with the Republican Army."

His last words were drowned by the roar of a helicopter. I had seen it hovering for some time, but now it flew low over our heads.

"I bet they've counted the buttons on your shirt," says Billy laughingly. "If you want to see the latest optical and bugging devices, the Ulster police is the place to go. They have all of them. We have attracted their attention because we're walking about and you're taking pictures. The helicopter has a radio link with police stations, and you've seen how many of those there are."

Sure enough, there are a lot of the fortress-like police precincts. They are forbidding structures surrounded by walls and coils of barbed wire, and topped by masts with banks of TV cameras. Nothing must escape their watchful eyes. The helicopter is on patrol all through the night, and nocturnal optical instruments enable the police to maintain their guard round the clock.

One precinct is situated not far from the notorious Milltown Cemetery. A watchtower with a slit of a window projects to the pavement. The bullet-proof glass is covered with bullet marks, but there are no holes in it.

The cemetery is deserted. Billy and I wander among the gravestones. We approach some fresh graves. I had never seen so many flowers, except perhaps on the grave of the balladeer and poet Vysotsky in Vagankovo Cemetery in Moscow. When the helicopter flies away, it is very quiet. These are the graves of Catholics who at various times took part in the struggle for Ireland's freedom and for civil rights. Here there is a monument to Bobby Sands and his comrades, the inmates of the Long Kesh jail.

A smashed granite slab catches my eye. This is evidence of a recent tragedy: a funeral procession was attacked by a terrorist (or perhaps two or three), wielding guns and throwing grenades. Unarmed people chased the assailant, who continued to fire into the crowd as he ran.

"Would you run after a man throwing grenades and firing at you?" Billy asks me point-blank.

"I don't think so."

"Here people are so desperate, they have nothing to lose and they don't think about danger and death anymore," Billy continues.

Life in Northern Ireland is such that it has little value for many members of the Catholic minority.

Stephen Clarke

We parted with Billy before the City Hall in the evening. He showed me the stop where I could take a bus for my guesthouse, called "Pearl Court." "Remember the name of your street, University Street," he said. I got off there and walked from one end to the other, but I found nothing remotely resembling my abode. Some kind soul from amongst the few passersby suggested that perhaps I needed University Road nearby. I jumped at the idea, but there was no "Pearl Court" there either. While I was standing wondering which way to go, a man in a helmet and uniform stalked past me. He cradled a rifle in his arms. In the dim light of the streetlamp the bayonet glinted. Another man was walking some twenty yards behind him. He was followed by a uniformed woman, but she did not carry a rifle. Some twenty yards behind them were two other members of the army patrol. Each of them eyed the strange man with a camera slung over his shoulder with suspicion.

I stood enigmatized by the sight of men who would not hesitate to use their weapons. They use them ruthlessly and skillfully. Sometimes their guns seem to go off as if by accident. But each time the bullet hits a "rioter" or "suspect."

The sound of the soldiers' footsteps died away in the distance. I saw a sign reading "University Square." This was my last hope. But there was no "Pearl Court." It was past ten o'clock on my first evening in Belfast.

I made for the entrance to the university compound where I had noticed a group of policemen on guard duty. An officer took off his cap, which turned out to contain a sizeable directory. But my guesthouse was not in his directory. The other policeman called the central command on his walkie-talkie. After a brief talk, he was able to give me directions. I thanked him. An officer stepped forward from the group. He had the build of a basketball player and a wrestler rolled in one.

"I'll see you there," he said in a tone that allowed no opposition.

We moved into the dark deserted street I had already passed a couple of

Belfast's central square through the sights of a British soldier.

times. (The street-sign said it was Malone Road. The omniscient Billy had made a mistake.)

"You a stranger here?" the officer made the opening move.

"Yes, all the hotels are booked by newsmen. That's how I landed in the guesthouse."

"You a foreigner?"

"Yes."

"What country?"

"You're a professional. Try to guess. If you guess in ten tries you win. If not, you'll answer a couple of questions. Is it a deal?"

"Done."

I had underestimated him. He guessed at the ninth try. But the ice was broken anyway.

"They take the situation in Northern Ireland close to heart in my country. People are dying here and we in the U.S.S.R. know the price of human life — we've suffered heavy losses. That's why I, a Soviet journalist, am here. What do you think of what is happening in Northern Ireland?"

"It's not a new problem. People are killing each other. Then they avenge the deaths. More deaths follow. It's a chain of killings. The Catholic minority wants Ulster to be part of the Irish Republic. But the standard of living here is comparatively higher, although not as high as in England... I will comply with any decision of the majority. To my mind the media pay too much attention to the actions of the extremists. Those who are between the two poles get no coverage from the press and television."

I thought he had a point.

"Where do you think this conflict is leading? Do you see a way out of the situation?" I asked my unexpected "escort."

"I don't know what to say. I can't imagine how all this can be settled," he said after a pause. "No, I'm not in a position to judge."

We had now reached "Pearl Court." We continued our conversation for a while. My escort's name was Stephen Clarke.

"So, Stephen, you don't think the Northern Ireland police need worry about unemployment in the foreseeable future?" I joked clumsily.

Clarke smiled. His right hand involuntarily reached for the handle of the gun sticking out of its holster.

"I don't think so."

Before we parted, I asked if I could touch the protective plate that covered his chiest. He didn't mind.

I knocked on it with my knuckles and I had a feeling that I was knocking on a safe.

Peter Thiede

Peter might well be lying on the beach listening to the rustling of the surf somewhere in the south. He had to use his holiday.

"The rule here is: if you haven't used your holiday for the previous year, forget you ever had it," said Peter.

Peter Thiede works at a margarine factory in Mannheim, West Germany. He is a skilled worker and earns a good wage. But he doesn't spend his money the way other people do. He rides a bicycle although he can afford a car. He buys books and travels. He prefers places that are off the beaten track. Once he saved up and bought a two-way ticket to Israel. He was curious to see why the West German press was so enthusiastic about life there. He spent three months working on a kibbutz, just for free meals. The trip was an eye-opener. He discovered that the press is silent about the most important thing: the low paid jobs are taken by Arabs and Sephardis. And they are treated atrociously. This time he sent his wife and son to a holiday resort and himself went to Northern Ireland. He wanted to understand what was really going on there.

"You can't discuss it with your workmates. All they talk about is money, women and cars. They don't want to know about events in the world. Narrow-minded people. I like to get to the root of things." He was silent for a while, then went on. "My friends back home think it's a religious feud. But I felt there was more to it than that. Now I am convinced that the conflict has social roots. There is a clash of political, social and economic interests."

I was glad to have met Peter Thiede, a man with a broad outlook. The Northern Ireland tragedy cannot but be of concern to honest people wherever they live.

VLADIMIR ZHITOMIRSKY

BELFAST — MOSCOW

Photos by author

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Over 500 American businessmen have arrived in Moscow for a session of the American-Soviet Trade and Economic Council opened on April 12.

Shall we give the Russians a hand?

EDGAR CHEPOROV

For America, and for the West in general, this is a strategic question.

Answers vary, but two clear-cut positions are discernible. Now, on the eve of the Moscow summit, writes observer W. Safire in The New York Times, well-known experts, including those repeatedly commissioned to do research jobs for the CIA, have prepared an analysis of the situation on the Soviet economy pronouncing it unsatisfactory. The observer's deduction is: the West should by no means "come to Moscow's rescue." On the contrary, the Russians' problems ought to be turned to America's own advantage. Perestroika must not be allowed to work – such is the gist of this position.

So Patrick Buchanan, until recently, a member of the Republican administration, and an ideologue of conservatism, suggests setting traps. Congress should forbid "any American bank," state or private, to grant loans and credits to socialist countries. If the International Monetary Fund or the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development decide to lend Moscow money, the U.S. should use its right of veto and threaten to withdraw from both organizations.

This position must be somehow justified and given political grounds for. Ex-U.S. President Richard Nixon is "best" at this. In his book just published "1999: Victory without War," he says: "Under no circumstances should the United States allow its foreign policy to be affected by changes in Soviet domestic policy. It would also be utter folly to make concessions in arms control negotiations to help Gorbachev succeed at home." A different line of action must be taken. The U.S. should "create political pressure on the Soviet Union to accept our terms."

All this is a relapse into old thinking, the response of the politicians alarmed by the results of the Washington summit, their answer to the impulse given by the INF treaty to nuclear disarmament. Had not the other approach to relations with the U.S.S.R. prevailed, there would have been neither summit, nor treaty. Asked "Is there anything to fear from the U.S.S.R. becoming stronger economically," Donald Kendall, Chairman of Pepsico Inc. replied: "There's more to fear if they don't." In Kendall's view, perestroika merits every praise because it elevates the Soviet Union to a new and higher level of international cooperation.

The research effort "How Should America Respond to Gorbachev's Challenge?" by the New York Institute for East-West Security Studies is keynoted by the same idea. "The sweeping economic reform undertaken by the Gorbachev leadership," it says, "offers important new opportunities for East-West cooperation." The rise of the Soviet economy will draw East and West closer together rather than push them further apart. What this paper recommends Western politicians to do in no way resembles Buchanan's suggestions. The government, it says, should not interfere in the granting of bank credits and loans to the U.S.S.R.; the establishment of joint enterprises should be encouraged; the U.S.S.R. ought to be granted observer status in GATT and, possibly, in the IMF.

Says Charles Hugel, President of Combustion Engineering, the first American company to conclude a joint venture agreement with the Soviet Union last year: "The thing is these people represent enormous markets and opportunities."

I've often heard local businessmen say that European and American markets are becoming increasingly crowded, and that failure to use the opportunities offered by trade with the U.S.S.R. means handing them on a plate to Western Europe, Japan and other rivals. So who's helping whom? W. MacMillan, the head of Cargill Inc., and Professor R. Ullman of Princeton University have written an article whose very title furnishes the answer to this question: "America's self-interest in helping Gorbachev."

Certain politicians would like to impose the nuclear arms race on us to "wear us down" economically. They are awaiting our economic collapse and wish our perestroika ill. Richard Nixon, for one, is dead certain that perestroika will fail.

He is not alone in misunderstanding what's going on in our country. Some seem to persist in misunderstandings, while others start pondering, comparing and analyzing facts. We are interdependent, we share this planet, therefore confrontation should give way to cooperation. The West finds it easy and difficult at once to answer the question of whether the Russians should be given a hand. If the U.S.S.R. is an "enemy," then it is stupid indeed to do business with it, even if it is of obvious mutual benefit. On the other hand, the realization of the fact that the U.S.S.R. is a partner, a political and economic entity not to be dispensed with, the inevitable conclusion is that partnership with it should be promoted rather than hampered.

We could, of course, do without developing and expanding economic links beneficial to us and the United States alike. But why should we? In the crucial period our country is now going through, we stand in greater need than ever of increased trade and joint ventures with the U.S. Under the circumstances, interdependence could yield tangible results. If we are more dependent on each other economically, Mikhail Gorbachev told American businessmen in Washington, we shall be more responsible in our political dealings with each other as well.

Interdependence... Once universally regarded as undesirable, in the nuclear age it is no longer so, although men like Richard Nixon have no use for it. He is for diktat, for "an ideological conflict that will last until well into the next century." Our approach is diametrically opposite: the U.S.S.R. rejects the ideologization of international relations. We hold different views, but we share this planet. The attitude to Soviet policy largely depends on the extent to which this fact is realized here. "I'm not dropping my guard or anything. But I think we have a potential here of recognition that we have two systems that aren't alike and that have different values... but that have a desire to prove that we can live in the world together in peace."

These words were uttered at the end of the Washington summit, after long hours of discussions, by none other than Ronald Reagan. The U.S. President not only grasped the quintessence of the Soviet position, but voiced his solidarity with it. We succeeded in our efforts to get our meaning across. Let Reagan be on his guard for as long as his correct notion of Soviet policy yields tangible results. The important thing now is to carry over the atmosphere of the Washington summit to Moscow.

New York

If not women, then who?

In 1951 she married a young man named Andreas. Many years later her husband, Andreas Papandreou, became Prime Minister of Greece. Margaret Papandreou answers questions from our correspondent.

Margaret Papandreou was born in the United States and studied at the University of Minnesota. She was interested in journalism and worked on the university's agricultural newssheet. It was at the university that she met Andreas Papandreou, who lectured there. They married and later moved to Greece. Margaret took an active part in the general election in which Andreas stood as a candidate for the Centre Union Party and won a seat in parliament. When, in April 1967, the Black Colonels took power in Greece, Papandreou was arrested and placed in solitary confinement.

The regime failed to persuade Papandreou to cooperate. He was released on condition that he left the country immediately. After spending a year in Sweden, the family moved to Canada, Toronto, where Andreas Papandreou was invited to lecture in economics at the university. Margaret wrote for the press and organized meetings. She wrote a book, "Nightmare in Athens," about the resistance movement in Greece and about the support given to the Black Colonels regime by the White House.

A Western journalist once asked Margaret Papandreou how she, an American, dared publicly declaring her anti-American sentiments. Her answer was that it was seeing the U.S.A. from the sidelines that had helped her understand the essence of imperialism, when unlimited strength and power were used to put pressure on other sovereign nations. She had seen that while living in a small country that was almost exclusively influenced and controlled by the United States. She added what she considered an important detail: the Greek people were not against the American people. Their anti-Americanism was a reaction against the policy of the Washington administration.

Today Andreas Papandreou is Prime Minister of Greece. What does his wife do? Margaret is founder and leader of the Women's Union of Greece, and is responsible for the international liaison of the coalition "Women for a Meaningful Summit." In addition she writes books for children.

— A few years ago you said: "Of course, it's true that I am attacked by the opposition press... Those who would like to damage Andreas attack me or my family. It's part of the political game." What would your answer be today?

— The same. Little has changed since then. The opposition remains the opposition. But I should like to add: permanent contacts with the women of Greece allow me to state confidently that the majority attach no importance to my American origin. Judge for yourself: we are challenging the capitalist system, the patriarchal way of thought, we are fighting for our rights every day as best as we can within our system, we are trying to change the attitude of society itself to questions of justice and equality for all its members... What has that to do with where I was born?

— Do your views coincide with the Prime Minister's stand on disarmament issues?

— Yes, our views are very close. The only difference is that the Prime Minister represents the decision-making state body. I can express my views much more freely. And yet I am all for women taking political office, not waiting patiently outside in the reception rooms. Maybe you have heard of a report compiled by a group of scientists and cultural figures in Britain. For five-six years they studied the work of politicians actively engaged in discussing problems of disarmament, defence, nuclear strategy. I was interested in the list they compiled. It begins with the names of Gorbachev, Reagan, Thatcher and other major statesmen, and consists of 800 people in all. But there are only four women on that list. I thought—what if it had been the other way round: four men and 796 women? Perhaps we might have had different results and achievements today.

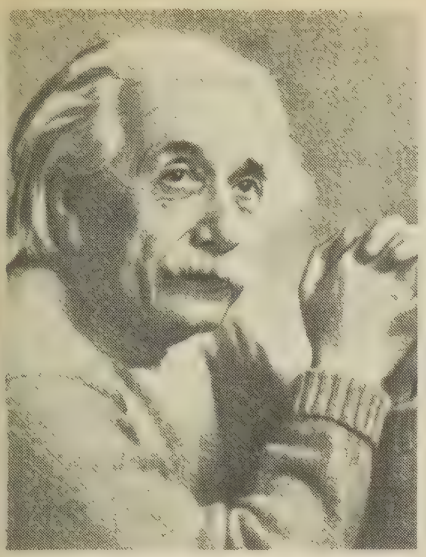
— Women gather at symposia, seminars and congresses. So it would be logical to ask why men shouldn't join together and get down to resolving their problems, of which there are probably no fewer. In other words, set up a men's organization.

As it is, men hold practically all government portfolios. They are together all the time: in parliaments, in the senates, on councils, committees and commissions on security, armaments and disarmament... They have no need to meet especially. We women as a rule remain outside affairs. But it is very natural to want to discuss publicly the problems affecting all of mankind, and search together for solutions. It was that desire that prompted us to set up our own forums. It is wonderful that some men support us. But at the same time, I should like to speak of what troubles and worries me. In the Greek parliament, for instance, women make up only four per cent of MPs. The same is true of Italy, and the United States. Only in some European countries—I have Scandinavia in mind—does a higher percentage of women take part in the work of the government.

— Mrs Papandreou, there are still American bases on Greek soil...

— The government has not yet decided what to do about them. A referendum has been announced. People will have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether or not to retain American bases in Greece. I believe that there should be no foreign bases in any country. At present we are seeking to have the Balkans proclaimed a nuclear-free zone. But speaking of the global stand taken by the Greek government, it boils down to the demand that both military blocs —the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO—should disarm and become allies.

ALEXEI BUDENNY



ALBERT EINSTEIN:

Our controversies are insignificant pettinesses compared to the danger which threatens all nations alike

In its November 26, 1947, issue New Times carried an open letter entitled "Dr Einstein's Mistaken Notions." It was signed by four eminent Soviet scientists: Sergei Vavilov, president of the Academy of Sciences, Abram Ioffe, director of the Physical-Technical Institute in Leningrad, Nikolai Semyonov, director of the Institute of Chemical Physics, and Alexander Frumkin, director of the Institute of Electro-Chemistry, all three institutes attached to the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. The polemic began over the question of atomic weapons and the proposed international authority for control over the use of atomic energy. Einstein's reply was not published by our magazine at the time. The editors would like to put the wrong to rights, returning not so much to the polemic between scientists, who lively discussed some of the burning issues of that time, as to the ideas expressed by the great physicist in his reply.

It seems to us that Einstein's thoughts are very much consonant with our time. Mikhail Gorbachev has remarked not without reason: "I think a mistake was made by all who did not heed the voice of Einstein and people of like mind. They warned that mankind had acquired power which called for a new approach. This warning was not considered seriously enough at the time, and mankind is now reaping the fruit of the disrespectful attitude to the opinion of scientists. We need the opinions of scientists, their competence."

Albert Einstein's letter*

Four of my Russian colleagues have published a benevolent attack upon me in an open letter carried by the New Times. I appreciate...the effort they have made and I appreciate even more the fact that they have expressed their point of view so candidly and straightforwardly. To act intelligently in human affairs is only possible if an attempt is made to understand the thoughts, motives, and apprehensions of one's opponent so fully that one can see the world through his eyes. All well-meaning people should try to contribute as much as possible to improving such mutual understanding. It is in this spirit that I should like to ask my Russian colleagues and any other reader to accept the following answer to their letter. It is the reply of a man who anxiously tries to find a feasible solution without having the illusion that he himself knows "the truth" or "the right path" to follow. If in the following I shall express my views somewhat dogmatically, I do it only for the sake of clarity and simplicity.

Although your letter, in the main, is clothed in an attack upon the non-socialistic foreign countries, particularly the United States, I believe that behind the aggressive front there lies a defensive mental attitude which is nothing else but the trend towards an almost unlimited isolationism. The escape into isolationism is not difficult to understand if one realizes what Russia has suffered at the hands of foreign countries during the last three decades – the German invasions with planned mass murder of the civilian population, foreign interventions during the civil war, the systematic campaign of calumnies in the Western press, the support of Hitler as an alleged tool to fight Russia. However understandable this desire for isolation may be, it remains no less disastrous to Russia and to all other nations; I shall say more about it later on.

Socialism is a framework not a solution

The chief object of your attack against me concerns my support of "world government." I should like to discuss this important problem only after having said a

*The letter, published in the American magazine Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1948, is slightly condensed at the expense of paragraphs dealing with the economic situation in the United States at that time.

few words about the antagonism between socialism and capitalism; for your attitude on the significance of this antagonism seems to dominate completely your views on international problems. If the socio-economic problem is considered objectively, it appears as follows: technological development has led to increasing centralization of the economic mechanism. It is this development which is also responsible for the fact that economic power in all widely industrialized countries has become concentrated in the hands of relatively few. These people, in capitalist countries, do not need to account for their actions to the public as a whole; they must do so in socialist countries in which they are civil servants similar to those who exercise political power.

I share your view that a socialist economy possesses advantages which definitely counterbalance its disadvantages whenever the management lives up, at least to some extent, to adequate standards. No doubt, the day will come when all nations (as far as such nations still exist) will be grateful to Russia for having demonstrated, for the first time, by vigorous action the practical possibility of planned economy in spite of exceedingly great difficulties. I also believe that capitalism, or, we should say, the system of free enterprise, will prove unable to check unemployment, which will become increasingly chronic because of technological progress, and unable to maintain a healthy balance between production and the purchasing power of the people.

On the other hand we should not make the mistake of blaming capitalism for all existing social and political evils, and of assuming that the very establishment of socialism would be able to cure all the social and political ills of humanity. The danger of such a belief lies, first, in the fact that it encourages fanatical intolerance on the part of all the "faithfuls" by making a possible social method into a type of church which brands all those who do not belong to it as traitors or as nasty evildoers. Once this stage has been reached, the ability to understand the convictions and actions of the "unfaithfuls" vanishes completely. You know, I am sure, from history how much unnecessary suffering such rigid beliefs have inflicted upon mankind.

Anarchy: economic and political

Any government is in itself an evil insofar as it carries within it the tendency to deteriorate into tyranny. However, except for a very small number of anarchists, everyone of us is convinced that civilized society cannot exist without a government. In a healthy nation there is a kind of dynamic balance between the will of the people and the government which prevents its degeneration into tyranny. It is obvious that the danger of such deterioration is more acute in a country in which the government has authority not only over the armed forces but also over all the channels of education and information as well as over the economic existence of every single citizen. I say this merely to indicate that socialism as such cannot be considered the solution to all social problems but merely as a framework within which such a solution is possible.

What has surprised me most in your general attitude, expressed in your letter, is the following aspect: You are such passionate opponents of anarchy in the economic sphere, and yet equally passionate advocates of anarchy, e.g., unlimited sovereignty, in the sphere of international politics. The proposition to curtail the sovereignty of individual states appears to you in itself reprehensible, as a kind of violation of a natural right. In addition, you try to prove that behind the idea of curtailing sovereignty the United States is hiding her intention of economic domination and exploitation of the rest of the world without going to war. You attempt to justify this indictment by analyzing in your fashion the individual actions of this government since the end of the last war. You attempt to show that the Assembly of the United Nations is a mere puppet show controlled by the United States and hence the American capitalists.

Such arguments impress me as a kind of mythology; they are not convincing. They make obvious, however, the deep estrangement among the intellectuals of our two countries which is the result of a regrettable and artificial mutual isolation. If a free personal exchange of views should be made possible and should be encouraged, the intellectuals, possibly more than anyone else, could help to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding between the two nations and their problems. Such an atmosphere is a necessary prerequisite for the fruitful development of political cooperation. However, since for the time being we depend upon the cumbersome method of "open letters" I shall want to indicate briefly my reaction to your arguments.

Nobody would want to deny that the influence of the economic oligarchy upon all branches of our public life is very powerful. This influence, however, should not be overestimated. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president in spite of desperate opposition by these very powerful groups and was reelected three times; and this took place at a time when decisions of great consequence had to be made.

Concerning the policies of the American government since the end of the war, I am neither willing, nor able, nor entitled to justify or explain them. It cannot be denied, however, that the suggestions of the American government with regard to atomic weapons represented at least an attempt toward the creation of a supranational security organization. If they were not acceptable, they could at least have served as a basis of discussion for a real solution of the problems of international security. It is, indeed, the attitude of the Soviet government that was partly negative and partly dilatory which has made it so difficult for well-meaning people in this country to use their political influence as they would have wanted, and to oppose the "war mongers." With regard to the influence of the United States upon the United Nations Assembly, I wish to say that, in my opinion, it stems not only from the economic and military power of the United States but also from the efforts of the United States and the United Nations to lead toward a genuine solution of the security problem.

Concerning the controversial veto power, I believe that the efforts to eliminate it or to make it ineffective have their primary cause less in specific intentions of the United States than in the manner in which the veto privilege has been abused.

Is it really unavoidable that, because of our passions and our inherited customs, we should be condemned to annihilate each other so thoroughly that nothing would be left over which would deserve to be conserved? Is it not true that all the controversies and differences of opinion which we have touched upon in our strange exchange of letters are insignificant pettinesses compared to the danger in which we all find ourselves? Should we not do everything in our power to eliminate the danger which threatens all nations alike?

If we hold fast to the concept and practice of unlimited sovereignty of nations it only means that each country reserves the right for itself of pursuing its objectives through war-like means. Under the circumstances, every nation must be prepared for that possibility; this means it must try with all its might to be superior to anyone else. This objective will dominate more and more our entire public life and will poison our youth long before the catastrophe is itself actually upon us. We must not tolerate this, however, as long as we still retain a tiny bit of calm reasoning and human feelings.

This alone is on my mind in supporting the idea of "world government," without any regard to what other people may have in mind when working for the same objective. I advocate "world government" because I am convinced that there is no other possible way of eliminating the most terrible danger in which man has ever found himself. The objective of avoiding total destruction must have priority over any other objective.

I am sure you are convinced that this letter is written with all the seriousness and honesty at my command; I trust you will accept it in the same spirit.

1968

Two decades have passed since the youth protest actions of 1968. Opinions are still divided on whether those actions amounted to a revolt. Was that a revolution? If yes, did it change the world or peter out without leaving a trace? Did those who rigged up barricades in May win or lose?

Why were they "angry"?

The year 1968 witnessed enough dramatic events to fill a century

ANDREI GRACHEV

"Don't trust anyone over 30." That was the warning issued to participants in the mass youth demonstrations of the 1960s by their 20-year-old leaders.

Today the young people of the 1960s have already passed their fortieth birthday, but many of them still regard themselves as belonging to the "generation of rebels" that openly challenged the Western Establishment and came into stormy and open conflict with them in 1968. Why are the 1968 veterans still so nostalgic about those events? How did it happen that 1968 "shaped a generation," as Time magazine put it, and what are the main features of that generation?

A roaring 1968

It is enough to leaf through the newspapers of 1968 to see that that year witnessed enough dramatic events to fill a century. The year 1968 is perhaps unrivalled in the postwar history for the concentration, intensity, impact and drama of the events it witnessed.

A glance back at just some of them bears this out.

The powerful, like a flood, New Year offensive of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front which blasted the hopes of the U.S. administration for a military victory in Indo-China and President Johnson's chances of reelection. Seeking revenge for the upheaval and humiliation (the Vietnam patriots had for a short period even taken over the American Embassy in Saigon), in March 1968 U.S. punitive units commanded by Lieutenant Calley burnt down the village of Song My, killing more than 500 civilians, including 182 women and 173 children.

Then came the assassination in

Memphis of Dr Martin Luther King, the leader of the black civil rights movement in the United States. The death of the Nobel Prize winner, the apostle of non-violence, sparked off racial revolts and disturbances in 110 American cities. Forty black Americans were killed in the process.

Dr King's assassination was followed in June 1968 by another act of political terrorism, which resulted in the death of another outstanding American—Robert Kennedy, who had very real chances of becoming president. His death put an end to the hopes of young Americans who linked his possible election with the chances of ending the war in Vietnam.

Tom Hayden, a former leader of Students for a Democratic Society, one of the most radical New Left organizations of the time, said in 1968: "I knew I was part of an apocalypse..." His wife, the tireless Jane Fonda, addressed the anti-war youth meetings then being held from coast to coast in the United States, in Western Europe and in Vietnam itself. It was in Vietnam also that the well-known American protest songstress Joan Baez sought shelter from American bombs during Christmas...

But 1968 was not only the year of the apocalypse in Vietnam. The year 1968 also brought the May barricades and a 9-million-strong strike in Paris, "emergency laws" and neofascist shots in the F.R.G., the political crisis in Prague, the riot of the "cultural revolution" in China, and the shooting at a student demonstration in Mexico City, the site of that year's Olympic Games. And in the centre of all those events—the target of police searchlights, clubs and water cannons—was the younger generation, which had lost its ideals and gods, which had rejected the past and had no faith in the future.

Robert Kennedy in his book "To Seek a Newer World", published just two months before his death, noted that the young people wanted to know why they were having to pay for mistakes made before they were born, long before they had reached the age when they could vote.

Deprived of any possibility of deciding their own destinies, the younger generation protested fiercely and angrily. The wave of youth and student demonstrations, meetings and sit-ins that swept the major Western countries at the end of the 1960s produced a new seismic term — youth-quake. The epicentres of this quake were Columbia University in New York and Berkeley in California, West Berlin and Tokyo...

And of course, mention should be made of Paris that May. The occupation of the Sorbonne, the red and black flags on the Odéon theatre, the uprooted trees on the Boulevard St. Michel—all those are not just illustrations in a French history book, but a scar on the memories of an entire generation.

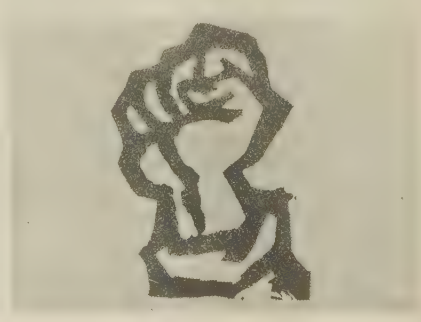
Those times had their heroes—the leaders of the various New Left organizations, as well as Anarchist, Maoist, Trotskyist and other leftist organizations and groups washed up by the tide of the protest movement. The names of Rudi Dutschke, Stokeley Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, which flashed like meteorites across the skies of 1968, will remain in the annals of the 1960s. The young had their idols: they ranged often from Marx to Mao, from Bakunin to Che Guevara (killed in the mountains of Bolivia just before 1968 began), people whom they knew better from portraits and posters than from their views and works.

1968 was the year of debacle in Vietnam.

Many Western scholars who sought to find the reasons for the youth revolt tried to explain it away in terms of the generation gap or the Oedipus complex of hostility to one's fathers. But one of the most difficult questions they sought to answer was: why 1968? Indeed, why was it in the sixties that the young generation changed from being a silent to a rebel generation, from conformism to the refusal to accept?

Be realists, demand the impossible!

It was no accident that the youth explosion coincided with a number of important and irreversible changes in the image of modern capitalism, and indeed in the world as a whole. It was not merely a question of a youth crisis—an ordinary, banal change in the young, but the young generation felt and reflected the profound symptoms of crisis that had by that time accumulated in society and were making themselves felt in social production, social relations, culture and ideology, as well as in the domestic and foreign policies of the major Western countries.



The rapid development of the scientific and technological revolution gave rise to new economic requirements, while at the same time aggravating social contradictions, the increasing subordination to the rule of the monopolies of widening spheres of material and spiritual life in society, its further de-humanization, and the increasingly repressive nature of the state—all that reverberated among the youth of the sixties with mounting force. To that one should add the aggravation of the conflict between the requirements of youth and its opportunities for self-expression, as well as the inability of bourgeois society to satisfy its specific needs in education, professional training, jobs, recreation and leisure, and access to culture and sports.

The discord between youth and society was manifested in different spheres—in politics, ideology, culture and what is called life styles. All this found its reflection in the emergence of a youth counter-culture. The flower children and other followers of the hippy cult, which appeared in the age of the mass production of artificial flowers, reflected youth's protest against the monstrous effect of technology on the environment, man's loss of his much-needed links with Nature, against ugly surrogates, clockwork oranges created by industrial machines that destroyed the most important element in the harmonious development of the individual.

The year 1968 introduced politics into areas where until then it had been considered an alien element, out of place: into the universities, lawyers' offices, doctors' consulting rooms, into those sections of the intelligentsia who felt themselves victims of social injustice. The student demonstrations were a manifestation of that important objective process of transforming the wide masses of young people who accounted for an increasingly substantial portion of the young scientific, technical and professional people into a subject of social life, and its involvement, often against its will, in the struggle of the main social forces in modern capitalist society.

Be realists, demand the impos-

sible! — that was the slogan that rang out from the Sorbonne in May 1968. But, leaving aside the rhetoric, one has to acknowledge that the participants in the student teach-ins and demonstrations put forward no impossible demands. What they called for was the abolition of an archaic education system, guarantees for democratic access to education for youngsters from working-class families, lower fees and higher scholarships, the right of students to participate in running the universities and guarantees of employment after graduation.

The students came out against police persecution and CIA recruitment in the universities, for the repeal of emergency laws and observation of democratic rights and freedoms. As realists, what they demanded was possible, in fact essential, for the renovation and transformation of society.

Their movement was viewed as a revolt, because at the time the demand for the observation of democratic rights and freedoms, opposition to injustice, war and aggression was regarded by those in power as subversive and rebellious.

The movement's misfortune was that at a certain stage separate groups of students let themselves be misled by irresponsible leftist ideologists and failed to merge their actions with the struggle of wide sections of the working people and working class. Nor can one overlook the responsibility of left-wing political movements and parties for this course of events. Not for nothing had Lenin said that the growth of "anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins" of the leaders of the working-class movement.

The blind alleys of leftist extremism

Because of the composition of the student masses, the movement was constantly being nudged to the left under the impact of the leftist extremist ideas coming from the representatives of the ranks of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie that made up the majority of the students, and the movement displayed a weakness for radical leftist theories and utopian ideas. Extremist leaders usually seek to make the most of the divided unhappy minds of the petty bourgeoisie and take over the leadership of any mass movement. Then too they sought to lead the angry young into the blind alleys of futile radical actions, which led to quick switches from periods of senseless fiery upsurges of the movement to periods of apathy, despair and despondency.

The crying ultrarevolutionary student slogans lost their fire and brightness when they came into contact with the realities of social life. So it was hardly surprising that the crowds of student ultrarevolutionaries diminished greatly after they came up against the difficulties of a real, not a verbal struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society.

As events developed, the rivalry between the different leftist groups that fought for leadership of the student movement became very acute. The alliance, which was far from being an alliance of like-minds, was based on temporary fortuitous alliances of non-homogenous political forces, on group individualism of opponents of collective organized action, and therefore it was bound to—as indeed happened—split up into separate unconnected components, thereby creating the impression of the "failure" and "disintegration" of what outwardly had seemed an impressive edifice, but which in reality had neither a stable framework nor a reliable foundation to stand on.

There is nothing surprising therefore in the fact that after the tide of mass action by the young had receded, the former representatives of the New Left, disenchanted with the results of the battles of 1968, should have formed the nucleus of leftist extremist organizations. Having lost their influence among the young and with students, many became "generals without armies" and found themselves back in the "ghetto" of small rival groups suffering from all the complexes of a bitter and despairing minority.

As the social basis of the leftist movements shrank, their extremist trends grew. Having lost contact with real social life and youth at large, the leftist organizations turned to the use of violence in the attempt to reinvigorate the dying movement. The tragic death of Aldo Moro in May 1978 at the hand of fanatical Red Brigade terrorists to mark the tenth anniversary of that May 1968 in Paris, demonstrated the political and moral depth to which those who believed a "revolutionary" aim could justify any means, even criminal, had fallen.

In the West, there are a number of people who claim that today's terrorists are the real heirs to the youth and student movements of the end of the 1960s. That is pure nonsense, as terrorism is the diametrical opposite of the mass democratic movement of the sixties. The aim of terrorism is to impose on the majority by force and fear the stand and views of a tiny minority. All that contradicts the creative spirit of the 1960s, since it rejects democracy, discussion and ex-

The U.S.: the silent generation has become riotous.

ploration. For that reason alone terrorism is a negation of most of the ideas and slogans put forward by that movement.

What has changed?

A UNESCO expert once compared the student movement of the 1960s with a river whose waters suddenly disappear in the sands only to reemerge once again in a new and unknown place. Where and in what form will that memorable year of 1968 reemerge in social life? The magazine L'Express bemoaned the fact that the fate of the generation of the 1960s might have proved just as banal as the fate of all generations approaching their forties who have to look back on the ashes of their last twenty years. What has happened to that generation in the absence of the revolutionary cause or utopia they dreamed of?

Perhaps that question should be put to the veterans? It's true that some of them, like Rudi Dutschke, are no longer alive, while others have opted out of politics. But yet others have been successful and many of them have become prominent figures.

Jesse Jackson, who on that fateful day in April stood side by side with Martin Luther King on the balcony in Memphis, is a hopeful for the Democratic nomination to the United States presidency. Dr King himself twenty years ago would have scarcely believed it possible.

Régis Debray, who wrote one of the first Manifestos of the New Left—the book "Revolution in the Revolution?"—is one of President Mitterrand's closest associates.

Perhaps less striking, but on the whole successful careers have been made by many other participants of those stormy events. But, of course, not by all. But I would say that the distance separating those angry young men from today's politicians, officials, journalists and scientists who have "settled down" is much greater than just the difference in their ages. What else?

Everyone agrees that nothing remained the same after 1968. But there is another question—what has changed?

Have the years that elapsed changed, crushed the rebels of 1968? Have they changed, even slightly, the world that surrounds them? Have they been able to "overcome" the hatred and injustice reigning in it as they sincerely promised when, joining hands, they sang "We shall overcome"? Or perhaps they simply betrayed themselves?

Those questions sprang to my mind when I listened to Joan Baez at a concert in Reykjavik on the eve of the Soviet-American summit. If it were not for the streaks of grey in her once jet black hair I could have believed I was back in 1968 at an anti-war meeting. Her concert was in fact a protest against war. But a different war—not the Vietnam war, but nuclear war. Yet Joan remained the same. So did her audience, judging from its reaction.

Irrespective of their ages, they were young.

■

The carnival is over

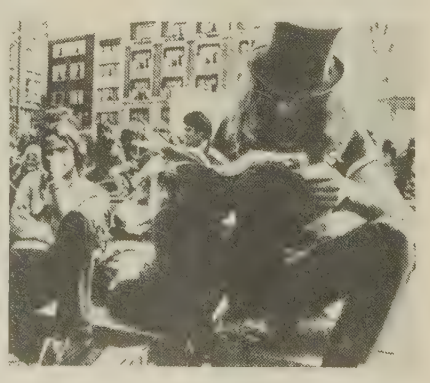
The record of 1968: an example to follow or a lesson to learn?

KSENIA MYALO

Twenty years is long enough for the rebels of yesteryear who seemed to shake the world to get ready to learn the "art of being a grandfather." It is also long enough to evaluate not only the immediate but also the long-term effect of that month of "carnivals and barricades" whose sound and fury turned out to be in direct proportion to the modesty of its transforming effect on society. This, incidentally, goes for the entire youth revolt of the 1960s, whose climax went down in history as May '68. It would be absurd, of course, to speak of its total failure to bring about practical results. On the contrary, it had a very tangible impact on political thinking, and speeded up the search for solutions to the problems it brought into focus. It is clear, however, that there is no cause for anniversary festivities, and that all the anniversary rhetoric can only apply to what May '68 was or seemed to its contemporaries.

As far back as the mid-seventies, when the petals of the "flower generation" had fallen and their colours faded, the press struck a nostalgic note: "Where have you gone, all you barefooted and longhaired rebels and iconoclasts, who ushered in the beginning of a new era?"

This rhetorical question is not difficult to answer. The vast majority of "the barefooted and longhaired" (subject, of course, to inevitable individual variations), properly shod, with their hair trimmed, have taken their places—and sometimes not bad ones—in the very same "system" whose foundations they had so lately been about to shake. In the spring of 1983, the Italian artist Giuliano Rossetti published a series of drawings dedicated to the 1960s and characterized by a somewhat bitter irony. The "heroes" of the drawings are "career-seekers, who once rushed forward with spears in their hands screaming: 'All power to imagination!'; and no sooner had the dust settled than they succeeded in finding snug berths. 1968 was a firework display that very quickly fizzled out." The fireworks were already extinguished for the children of the rebels of '68, as was reaffirmed by the student demonstratitons in France in late 1986. Stylistically, they were as different from their parents' revolt as December is from May. They showed that a carnival as a means of expressing one's social protest and carrying out a radical renovation of society had no attraction whatsoever for the new, far more sober and adult generation.



The Netherlands: hippies in the search of the lost harmony.

Of course, this change in style reflected a change in the "quality of the time," the special climate of the 1980s, which began with a dramatically aggravated international situation that cast a sombre shadow on public feelings. The 1980s had also introduced a far from festive spirit into the internal life of developed capitalist countries by reviving the "unemployment syndrome," seemingly abandoned in the prewar past, and the associated sudden shifts in social psychology.

The carnival pranks of their parents provoke a condescending smile from the "yuppies," the new intellectual elite that has been able to adapt to the socio-economic structures produced by the post-industrial civilization. For the "yuppies" like not only comfort but also the cool cleanness of the life-style made possible by the electronic era. They also appreciate the oppor-

tunity for vigorous intellectual effort and intellectual games that the computer culture affords those who succeed in penetrating this new paradise.

The carnival joys of the May rebels and their revolt against affluence, made safe by parents and the social security system for the middle class, exasperated young people who found themselves on the wrong side of the fence in the post-industrial paradise, with the prospect of not only stark poverty but also profound human degradation looming ahead. And, therefore, the tone of this world is set not by the round dances and flower garlands of 1968 but by the bunker groups of skinheads, whose bitterness more and more often causes the public to consider the possible consequences of such an underground concentration of pent-up young energy.

And there are many reasons for believing that should this bunker youth go out on the barricades, the streets might become a scene of bloody games.

No, the Great Festival, as May '68 was described even 10 years after the events, is unlikely to repeat itself in the near future. Its imagery and associated schemes for reform are so thoroughly played out and seem so naive today that the subject could be considered disposed of, were it not...

Were it not for the surprising fact that now, 20 years later, we are suddenly confronted with a replay of the idea of a carnival renewal of society in our own country—so pronounced is the tendency to represent the hipster-punk component of the wide spectrum of youth feeling, initiative and self-expression as the epitome of the spirit of renewal and change.

Passionate outpourings in the press about the films "Rock" and "Assa," not yet on general release, the newspaper slogans "'Assa' into the Masses" are, indeed, reminiscent of the young days of Elvis Presley and Jerry Rubin—so zealously are we assured that there can be no renovating force in the world other than rock.

What this amounts to is, apparently, not merely taking one's stand with regard to rock music qua music, artistic phenomenon or even socially controversial cultural phenomenon. No, a much larger claim is being made—that of using rock as a sounding-board for a certain universal (and presumably uniquely correct) stance in life, the very stance whose twentieth anniversary we mark next May and whose modest renovating potential has been demonstrated so effectively throughout all these years, years, incidentally, of critical self-scrutiny for the movement's veterans.

Therefore, I really wish we've used the time to give a more thorough study to youth counterculture which combined with a broader youth protest but did not exhaust it. We fetishize the phenomenon—which has long come to occupy an important though not exclusive place in the West—as a trend in modern music or a pastime. It would hardly occur to anyone to identify prospects of social renewal with rock music, or to regard the latter as a symbol of some extra-civic, non-conformist social behavior.

Some features of May '68 and the whole youth revolt of the 1960s have suddenly come into prominence, features on which their participants can still pride themselves today and which our youth counterculture has so far failed to reproduce: their ability to identify universally relevant and burning social issues and, in particular, their hypersensitivity to events in the hot spots of our planet, its misfortunes and sufferings. For the rebels of those years were literally heartbroken over the events in Vietnam, Latin America, the tragedy of the Palestinians and the scourge of racism. And whatever lapses into extremism they may have committed, the very fervour of their worldwide compassion and global resonance will remain in historical memory as the reaffirmation of their right to the somewhat overambitious claims with which they emerged on the world scene.

Against this background, our youth counterculture still appears strikingly provincial—not only because imitation prevails in it over original creativity, but primarily because it turns a deaf ear to global problems.

There must evidently be some fundamental reasons for such a pronounced lack of global sensitivity, and I ask myself whether this is not also the payoff on the overprotracted isolation from the rest of the world in which—through no fault of their own—our young people still find themselves. This isolation is becoming particularly intolerable when the ideological grounds for it, if not justification in the form of the "sieged mentality," are beginning to disappear.

The twentieth anniversary of May, of the events in which Western youth so resolutely—albeit so vociferously and incompetently—stated its right to be an equal partner in discussing the problems of our indivisible world, should plainly compel us to seek ways of overcoming this "provincialism" of our own youth's thinking which is fraught with rather serious consequences. ■

From May '68 to May '88

A revolution of the spirit was not defeated in 1968

LEONID MLECHIN

The French philosopher André Glucksmann believes that every twenty years a new generation comes into its own on the battlefields or in protest marches. The milestones have been the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the Paris Commune, the war of 1870, the Dreyfus Affair (1894), World War I and World War II, and, finally, the revolt of 1968. Another change of generations occurred two years ago, in 1986, when Paris students and schoolchildren went out into the streets to voice their protest against the higher education reform. There had been no such massive demonstrations even in 1968 but, as distinguished from their parents, these young people, according to the French press, did not show the slightest interest in politics: they did not criticize society, nor did they want to change the world; instead, they set themselves a very specific and feasible goal—the lifting of restrictions on admission to institutions of higher education. No rebellion, no barricades. Law and order.

I may object to this statement of the French press: the strength of the social protest of the young has been underestimated. There is yet another possibility: holding the capitalist press responsible for whole sections of the young "going bourgeois."

It makes sense, however, to change the customary frame of reference somewhat. If we do not believe that the 1968 revolt ended in defeat, there is no need to probe into the reasons why the youth movement has declined. These turn out to be so many that their superfluity is itself questionable.

Since May 1968 the world has never been the same. There have been no changes in the socio-economic structure of a single nation, but the chemistry of the social atmosphere has changed, indeed. It is fair to call the events of 1968 a revolution. But it was a revolution of the spirit.

Like their brothers in other countries, the French students built barricades. But they did not insist on

Daniel Cohn-Bendit: "If society is unable to understand you..."

shooting. They proposed to stop and reflect.

They did achieve their goal. They were not just allowed to listen to any music, wear their hair long and dress as they pleased. They forced society to move left—not only in the narrow party political sense but in a broader one—and reflect on such problems as safeguards of human freedom and the confrontation between spirit and power.

Why then we cannot resist the temptation to accuse the "1968 rebels" of inconsistency and a bent for cheap showmanship and self-advertisement? This motif constantly emerges with didactic overtones: they should have gone further, done this or that, entered into a coalition with such and such a force or forces.

Consistency is a good thing as long as it does not degenerate into obstinacy and oversimplification. Rotten eggs and fairly heavy cobblestones were part of the students' ideological arsenal. What step would have followed the May barricades? Guns out of which, to use a popular cliché of the time, "power grows"? In the case it was good that the students were "not very consistent."

Fearing terrorist acts, Paris, even the Champs-Elysées, is patrolled by paramilitaries with machine guns. French society is wary of the use of violence. Next year will see the bicentenary of the French Revolution, but reverence for the epoch-making event is mingled with cheerless reflections on the post-revolutionary terror. The fight against Royalist Vendée is viewed by many as the ruthless extermination of peasants who would have preferred to cultivate their land than participate in revolutionary meetings and marches. Still sadder reflections are inspired by the power struggle between the leaders of the triumphant Revolution.

This recalls to mind something that was said two centuries ago after the arrest of one more group of revolutionaries: "Either it is true that the greatest leaders of the country were traitors or it is not true. If it is true, what is one to think of a republic where such blackguards were leaders? If it is not true, what is one to think of a state that dares to treat its finest servants in this manner?"

The bloody experience that marred the image of the Revolution did not disappear without trace. The experience of others was added to one's own. According to the student leaders, Stalin's acts of repression played havoc with the left, the Western intellectuals and the young that built barricades in Paris in May 1968. Least of all did they want a repetition of this experience.

While in Paris, I tried to look up Daniel Cohn-Bendit, one of the Paris student leaders, but he was in the F.R.G. He had not gone bourgeois, nor had he taken up a machine gun. He chose a third way. After 1968 he worked as a teacher in a kindergarten, then joined the Greens (he has a West German passport) and got involved in the peace movement. I was going to ask him whether his decision was due to disappointment in the ideology of revolt, rebellion and mutiny. I received an answer without asking my question—through Die Zeit, the newspaper that gave Cohn-Bendit a chance to express himself.

"If it seems to you that you are right, a thousand times right, but society is unable to understand you, this is the moment when psychological and political circumstances emerge, causing various social groups to come out in protest... When you see people doing their utmost to prevent change, if you remember that people do not want to die and you fear their death, then you can see why people, young and not so young, decide, for example, to cut down a pylon. Of course, it is politically wrong. It will not stop the use of nuclear power. But isn't it more terrible when it makes no difference whether violence is used against things or against people? The theoreticians of ultra-left terrorism believe 'revolutionary violence' can speed up developments in our society. They expect that those who begin by throwing eggs and cutting down pylons will ultimately find themselves in their ranks. It is precisely the goal of an enlightened democratic society to frustrate these plans and prevent violence. A pylon that has been cut down can be replaced, but a man who has been killed can never be revived..."

It was surprising to hear this sermon on anti-violence from one whom I visualized as a vehement rebel on a barricade. The revolution of 1968 was bloodless.

Its leaders defended that right to civil disobedience that should be written into constitutions (as is the case in many countries). People have a right to demonstrate even under the wrong slogans. If they are dispersed, violence will flare up. The revolution's leaders said: "In any democracy there is an in-built risk that people will not abide by its laws. And only when the aim is this sort of utopia, an image of a humane democracy which guarantees maximum human rights right down the line even to our bitterest enemies, only then will democracy flourish... Otherwise we will have to return to those means of totalitarian, authoritarian protection which, though understandable as such, will be of no use to society, as they never have been in the past."

Twenty years ago the young came out in defence of individual freedom, the individual's right to choose. They upheld this right using all the non-violent means at their disposal. Their appearance and addiction to counter-culture were largely a form of protest too (it should not be forgotten either about the democratic principles of counterculture).

May 1968 was a revolution of the spirit. Breaking down the wall of silence, collaborationism, hypocrisy and humiliation, breaking down petrified conventions, May 1968 helped realize the value and dignity of human life.

In 1988 the young are thinking and talking about what is relevant to the present. The demands of the present are not an imitation of part of 1968 (its counterculture) nor, at the same time, are they a sign of retreat or the renunciation of former ideals. The challenge of the times should not always be met by barricades.

May 1968 will not be repeated.

■

Photos from Time magazine (U.S.A.) and New Statesman (Britain)

Party conferences: the background

The national party conference, to open on June 28 this year, will be a major political event in the life of the CPSU and the Soviet people.

Many of our readers are asking what place conferences hold in the political life of the party.

This subject is discussed in an interview with Prof. Vasily Bondar, departmental head at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU Central Committee.

New Times. What is the difference between a party congress and a party conference?

Vasily Bondar. A congress, as the supreme body of the party, has broad powers and functions, whereas a conference is a form of collective discussion to resolve urgent issues arising before the party between congresses. A congress is convened once every five years, while a conference deals with current issues of party policy.

Before the October revolution, conferences were held in accordance with the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (April-May 1905) on "periodic conferences of representatives of different party organizations." The resolution said in part: "Considering that unity... is best of all achieved by a joint discussion of all issues of social democratic theory and practice, the Third Party Congress expresses the wish that both central and local committees hold, as frequently as possible, conferences of representatives of different organizations of our party."

The Eighth All-Russia Conference of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in December 1919 adopted new Rules. Point 26 of the Rules stated that once every three months the Central Committee should convene a conference of representatives of the regional and Moscow committees of the party.

N.T. Can we speak of a national conference as one of the higher bodies of the party?

V.B. Yes, we can. I would mention here the amended Rules approved by the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) held in March 1939, which defined the powers of national conferences and their place among the higher bodies of the party. According to the Rules, a national conference holds third place after a congress and the Central Committee.

A conference was empowered to renew a part of the Central Committee, that is, remove from this body members negligent in their duties and elect new ones to replace them. It was also entitled to add new full members from among the alternate members elected at the previous congress, and to elect new alternate members instead of them.

According to the above-mentioned Rules, the decisions of a national party conference (with the exception of the replacement of some members of the Central Committee and the election of new alternate members) were to be approved by the Central Committee and, having been confirmed, became mandatory on all party organizations.

N.T. It is noteworthy that the intervals between the holding of national conferences varied in the process of the development of the Soviet state. What were the reasons for this?

V.B. Indeed, the intervals varied, and in some periods conferences were not held at all. The resolution of the Third Party Congress said that conferences should be convened as frequently as possible. According to the Rules adopted by the Eighth All-Russia Conference, such forums had to be called every three months. The Rules approved by the 12th All-Russia Party Conference established an interval prompted by experience – once a year, and the 18th Congress specified – at least once a year. Under the Rules adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress, national party conferences can be held by the Central Committee in the period between congresses when the need arises.

Altogether, there were 18 conferences

The house, in Prague, where the Sixth All-Russia Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was held.

over a period of 36 years: the first in December 1905 and the last, the 18th, in February 1941. They had a perceptible impact on the life of the party.

Some conferences made changes in the leading bodies. For instance, the Sixth (Prague) Conference held in January 1912 re-established the main party institutions abolished by the liquidationists. It elected a seven-member Central Committee led by Lenin (Lenin, Zinovyev, Orjonikidze, Spandaryan, Goloshchekin, Schwarzman and Malinovsky).

A new Central Committee was elected in April at the Seventh Party Conference (Lenin, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Milyutin, Nogin, Sverdlov, Smilga, Stalin and Fyodorov). The subsequent conferences, from the 8th to the 17th, made no changes in the leading bodies of the party.

N.T. What is the organizational structure of the conferences, and what norms and rules were used in holding and conducting them?

V.B. Initially, there were no fixed rules for holding a conference, and the composition of delegates was made up according to the procedure established by the Central Committee in each particular case. For instance, the first conference was held by delegates who had assembled for a party congress that could not meet in the country because of the stormy revolutionary events there.

The Eighth Conference (December 1919) was convened in accordance with a definite representation quota: one delegate with a casting vote from each regional party committee, and one delegate with a deliberative vote from each political department of the 16 armies existing at the time.

In keeping with the Rules adopted by the 18th Congress, delegates to a conference were elected at plenary meetings of regional and territorial party committees and the central committees of the Communist parties of the constituent republics. It was specified that election procedures and representation quotas would be set by the Central Committee of the party.

Many conferences were usually attended, with a deliberative vote, by members of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission who had not been elected delegates from their party organizations.

N.T. How will the Communists be represented at the forthcoming, 19th national party conference?

V.B. A representation quota of one delegate for every 3,780 party members has been set. Delegates will be elected by secret ballot at plenary meetings of the central committees of the Communist parties of the constituent republics and of territorial and regional party committees. In the Communist parties of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, delegates will be elected at plenary meetings of the regional party committees of these republics.

Delegates from the party organizations of the Soviet army and navy and inland and frontier troops will also be elected, together with other delegates, at the plenary meetings of the central committees of the Communist parties and territorial and regional party committees. As for Communists serving in Soviet army and naval units abroad, they will elect delegates at conferences of their respective party organizations. The election of delegates is to be completed by May 1988.

N.T. What is the agenda for the forthcoming conference?

V.B. It will undoubtedly be a broad discussion on the future of perestroika, particularly in the party organizations themselves, on democratization in all spheres of public life, and on the ability of the Communists to provide innovative leadership.

It should be said that previous national conferences discussed important issues relating to agricultural development, nationalities, tactics and party development. When Lenin was alive, party conferences also discussed the Central Committee's reports on political and organizational work and the political situation in the country, and considered different aspects of the work of Soviets and trade unions, as well as of cooperatives of different kinds, the results of implementing economic plans and guidelines for economic development.

The June plenum of the Central Committee approved the following agenda for the 19th Conference: 1. The progress achieved in carrying out the decisions of the 27th Party Congress, the principal results of the first half of the 12th five-year plan period, and the tasks of party organizations in the extension of perestroika. 2. Measures for further democratization of party and public life.

N.T. You have mentioned party documents pointing to the need to hold conferences as frequently as possible. Why was it that previous conferences were held sporadically?

V.B. From 1941 on conferences were "eliminated" from party life. I see one reason for that: discussion, the free exchange of opinions characteristic of conferences was completely alien to the very atmosphere of the personality cult, and the congresses held in those years lost much of the Leninist spirit of sincerity, debate and pluralism.

There is also another reason: the Rules adopted by the 17th, 19th and 22nd party congresses did not envisage such conferences at all. Only the 23rd CPSU Congress held in 1966 introduced an amendment to the effect that in the period between congresses the Central Committee can, when the need arises, convene a national conference to discuss urgent issues of party policy. However, even after that conferences were not held.

The point is that the internal life of the party was also affected by stagnation in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Party bodies did not pay proper attention to the strict observance of Leninist principles and standards in party life. The principle of collective leadership was violated, and the role of elected bodies weakened.

The 27th Congress made a number of amendments to the Rules, aimed at consolidating the democratic principles in the life of the party. One of them is the provision for party conferences.

The convening of the 19th National Conference is, I think, a revolutionary event in the life of the party, for it promotes practical democratization and activity on the part of Communists. Like many others, I see in this a revival of Leninist norms of party life.

A great deal is changing in the country in the course of perestroika, a revolutionary renewal of Soviet society, particularly in the general atmosphere and the activity of the Communist Party. The mechanism for the formation of leading party bodies is being improved and control over them increased. Glasnost, criticism and self-criticism in the party's ranks are developing. The forthcoming conference will enable us to sum up the political experience gained after the 27th Congress and review the rates and quality of the country's progress along the main lines of economic and social renewal.

Interviewed by
YURI SHEVCHENKO

Self-support at all levels: the only alternative

Perestroika is action by those who want to work and know how against those who do not know how and do not want to work

NIKOLAI SHMELYOV

The strategy laid down by the June 1987 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee is of decisive significance for the economics of perestroika. The plenum created highly promising potential openings for the restructuring of our entire economic system. Now the crucial thing is to what extent these openings will be utilized. Here I would like to dwell on some points that have come to the fore since last June.

180,000 directives

It is becoming increasingly clear that we did not fully foresee the difficulties we have to contend with now. The farther perestroika advances, the more often do we find ourselves asking: could these difficulties not block the entire process, might not a situation arise in which the active supporters of renewal could find themselves tied hand and foot?

I would pinpoint three areas in which I believe more resolute action is required of the architects of perestroika.

Nikolai Shmelyov is a prominent Soviet economist and writer

Today the sphere of practical action is of greater significance than ever before – I am referring to economic life both in the cities and in the countryside. In particular, it seems to me that had we carried out radical changes with the same resolve as, say, the advocates of deep-going reforms in China, we would already have made significant headway on our food market.

Perestroika has not yet made a deep imprint on agriculture. Clearly, the opportunities afforded the collective and state farms by the decision allowing them freely to market 30 per cent of their above-plan output have not been realized as yet. The unpublicized practice of sweeping the farms clean of their produce practically down to the last cucumber remains almost untouched. The hastily drawn up law proscribing unearned income degenerated in practice into raids on private greenhouses, medieval roadblocks and other forms of pressure on those who grew more produce on their garden plots than had hitherto been considered normal. As a result, at the previously well-supplied Krasnodar market place, for instance, 500 of its 1,200 market stalls remained unused at the height of the season last year.

The local authorities, even though they do not come out openly against the family contract, act in a manner that kills any desire on the part of individuals to make more effective use of their garden allotments. The family or collective contract greatly simplifies the relations between the peasants and the purchasing agencies. However, the entire three-storey bureaucratic pyramid towering over the village today exists for the sole purpose of extracting the planned amount of obligatory deliveries. If the farms themselves begin selling their produce on the open market, the ground will be knocked from under this "Egyptian pyramid," and that is precisely why the hundreds of thousands of administrators on all its floors are propounding the imperative need for the obligatory plan of deliveries.

But what I still fail to see is this: where else would all the farm produce go if not to our collective farm markets and state stores? Who, besides the state, is the big buyer in our country? Meanwhile, our "rivers of milk and honey" flow along the reinforced concrete channel of the plan, which does not make the distance to the consumer any shorter.

The same phenomena – despite lip service to perestroika – is to be observed in industry as well. The idea of scrapping all the rules and regulations that run counter to the law on the state enterprise is still hanging in the air. Some 20,000 have been scrapped, but the remaining 180,000 are still in force. The law was hamstrung from the outset. How can one speak of the independence of enterprises when in most branches of industry state contracts account for 100 per cent (or even more) of their output? In the country as a whole 82 per cent of the output of industrial enterprises is planned from the top. Of course, the remaining 18 per cent is better than nothing, but I am not at all certain that it will last until the end of the year.

The enterprises were permitted to keep part of the profit, but exactly what part the law does not specify. In the case of some exemplary and much publicized enterprises the deductions from profits are about 55 per cent, but for the majority, the figure runs to 85-95 per cent. Add to this that the number of obligatory, not optional, economic indicators has grown, that the enterprises do not know what to do with their money because wholesale trade so far could be likened to snowdrops breaking timidly through the snow, and the resulting picture will be far from encouraging.

Let the ruble work

In my opinion we must treat economic growth rates with great circumspection. High growth rates should be preserved only in the few branches that determine scientific and technological progress, such as microelectronics, biotechnology and new materials. In agriculture, it is not so much growth of crop yields in absolute terms that is needed as good roads, modern elevators and other storage facilities. We produce twice as much mineral fertilizers as the U.S., 6-7 times more tractors and 14 times more combine harvesters. And at the same time we lose a great deal in the process of harvesting

and do not know how to preserve what has been harvested.

Now let us see how much footwear and clothing we produce and how much we sell. The production indicators keep rising. But what do we see in the shops? It is not quantity we need but quality. We must opt for quality, temporarily avoiding indiscriminate emphasis on increasing production growth rates.

The third area of difficulties I would associate with the social aspects of perestroika. Sharp, frank discussion is under way in the press about price reform, a financial reform, and employment problems. The most difficult, politically crucial issue, to my mind, is price reform. The bulk of the population still does not see why it is necessary, although it should be obvious to all that we cannot do without it.

What could be the purpose of such a reform? One possible purpose would be to create a system of economically justified cost standards so that all enterprises would be guided by economic advantage; another would be to regulate their financial affairs through the reform: to do without subsidies and cut costs. Can such a reform be effected without hurting anyone? I am sure it can. However, guarantees are needed.

It is my conviction that the worst hangover from the economy of the Stalin epoch, and one we still labour under, is the system of prices dating from the period between the late 1920s and the early 1930s. If we cannot bring ourselves to take a decisive step to break out of the realm of crooked mirrors, it will be a long time before we understand what in our economy costs more than it should or less, and what direction our economy should take. The population annually receives about 90 billion rubles in subsidies. This money could accrue to us in the form of wage increases or lower prices for a whole number of consumer goods. The important thing is how this is done. The June CPSU Central Committee plenum gave us political guarantees that the price reform would be effected without detriment to the population.

Price reforms – with greater or lesser success – have been carried out in a number of other socialist countries. In our country, it would perhaps be better to carry it out not within a brief space of time, by 1991, but later. Our Hungarian friends adopted a decision in 1976 to double the price of meat. But before this was done the decision was publicly discussed at length for several years by top government leaders and the press. The people came to see that the reform would help to make livestock raising profitable and that not a single family would suffer. It took a long time to prepare the ground, but the reform was effected painlessly. When, three months later, Poland decided to do likewise, it became obvious at once that the move was a hasty one.

Chinese economists told me that price reform was the most difficult and risky aspect of economic restructuring. As we know, rationing is still practised in China. Rice sold on ration cards costs half as much as on the open market. Incidentally, the Chinese market is by and large adequately supplied with this staple food. In my opinion, the government could end the rice rationing already now,

Drawing by Vasily Tereshchenko

but it has not done so because certain sections of the working people are accustomed to buying rice at reduced prices and consider this quite normal. Price reform is a subject that should be aired frankly and thoroughly day in and day out.

The next problem is financial reform. Here everyone looks for some catch, suspecting the government of harbouring some ulterior motives. Yes, in 1947 (when there was a monetary reform in the U.S.S.R.) it was necessary to withdraw excess money from circulation. But who had excess money after the war? Honest people had no money to speak of then. Today, the situation is quite different; strange though it may seem to some, it is the honest people who have money today, and only relatively few have money come by dishonestly.

But that is beside the point. The point is that our economy is based on a peculiar method of financing. For instance, turnover tax in itself gives rise to inflation. Here's one example: a pair of shoes, say, is produced, but before it leaves the factory gates the tax on it has already been entered on the expenditure side of the budget. The shoes lie gathering dust in the warehouse, but the taxes thus collected already go into financing the construction of a new factory. It is partly due to this that we launch simultaneously twice as many construction projects as we are actually able to build. Another source of inflation is the extension of non-repayable credits to collective and state farms, a practice that has already unfortunately become almost the rule.

Professionals versus dilettantes

There is a great deal of talk nowadays about reducing the personnel of the ministries by 50 per cent. But, as we know, according to Parkinson's law, any hierarchal structure which is reduced by **n** is capable of reproducing itself after some time to the dimension **n+1**. What is needed is not mechanically to cut staffs by half, but to abolish unnecessary functions. So long as the function of issuing orders without answering for their consequences exists, the auspicious climate for ministry personnel to multiply will remain.

I have heard it said that perestroika is action by the professionals against the dilettantes, action by those who know how to work and want to work against those who do not know and do not want to work. It would be naive to assume that the outcome of this struggle is a foregone conclusion. The problem of employment arises outside the managerial sphere as well. It has been estimated that up to one quarter of our labour force in industry is superfluous even by the existing far from perfect technical standards. Any factory manager can as a rule say at once what percentage of the work force he would cut if he were not obliged to send workers to help bring in the harvest or sort vegetables at storage facilities. Yet at the same time we have vast capacities standing idle.

Today, in order to keep people occupied somehow we often keep unprofitable and technically obsolete enterprises running. By suppressing the symptoms of the malaise we spend twice as much on medication.

In conclusion, I should like to point to a simple fact the significance of which we have not yet fully grasped: cost accounting at all levels is the only way.

In common with all sincere supporters of perestroika I expect a great deal from the forthcoming Party conference. The further democratization of our life is clearly the only effective weapon against the bureaucrats standing in the way of economic reform. I hope that the Party conference will say its weighty word on this question as well.

The party and reforms

At its meeting on April 8 and 9, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia gave a frank and critical assessment of the party's readiness for reforms and further democratization.

The meeting discussed the proposed changes in the central bodies and in economic management, and adopted decisions on these questions. A number of changes in personnel were also made.

In his report on the party's work in the context of restruc turing the economic mechanism and further extending socialist democracy, General Secretary Milos Jakes pointed out that the policy of accelerated socio-economic development, reforms and democratization in all spheres of public life, elaborated at the 17th party congress and the Central Committee meeting last December, was a vivid manifestation of the party's responsibility to the people of Czechoslovakia and the international working-class movement.

The plenary meeting took a clear stand on one of the most complex problems of exercising the party's leading role, namely the delimitation of spheres of activity and responsibility between the party, government, economic and other organizations. It was noted that the party acts as the chief driving force in the reforms. But, keeping within the bounds of Czechoslovakia's political system, the party must ensure that the government and economic bodies do not shift onto it responsibility for tackling their own problems and for unpopular measures. At the same time, the party cannot arrogate to itself the right to replace these bodies in decision-making on questions they ought to tackle themselves.

The people's trust in the party and its leading role, the unity of the party, the working class, and all working people can only be strengthened on the basis of fundamental policy that backs up words with actions and is not afraid to give a truthful picture of the situation. Though the aims of party and government policies coincide, the methods of achieving them should be specific. The party should work first of all where it is indispensable, namely, in the political and ideological fields and in the selection of personnel.

The switchover to a new economic mechanism calls for an appropriate moral and political atmosphere. It is necessary to oppose attempts to take advantage of reforms for selfish purposes, refute notions about the automatic operation of new economic methods, enhance discipline and public order, and combat all negative phenomena.The party organizations must guide the process of establishing socialist self-management in the economy, ensure the party's influence in elected bodies, and help people devoted to socialism who enjoy prestige among the population to be elected to them.

Considerable attention in the report and in the debate was given to the party's activity in the National Front, an organization through which socialist democracy is developed, and cooperation between Communists and members of other political parties and public organizations expanded. The plenum warned against unnecessary and imprudent interference in the work of the National Front and denounced the practice of placing unrealistic objectives before its individual organizations and bodies. The party line should be conducted through Communists who have been elected to the National Front bodies.

The work of the Central Committee proper was also discussed. It was stressed that the Central Committee should constantly seek to enhance the prestige of elected bodies, consistently strengthen collective leadership in their activity, and extend interparty democracy. In this respect the party must serve as an example for all other bodies and organizations. The Central Committee believes that the election of party leaders by secret ballot from among several candidates, contests for economic positions, and the accountability of executive personnel not only to higher bodies but also to party members, work collectives and constituencies are an important element in the efforts to promote democracy.

The plenum decided that from now on the posts of general secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and first secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia can be held for not more than two terms and the posts of first secretaries of regional and district party committees for not more than three terms. It was noted that the time had come to draw up a long-term programme for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. At its next meeting, the Central Committee will discuss the proposal to set up a commission to draft a new programme.

MICHAL PODZIMEK

Prague

A success in Rome lost upon Moscow?

Reflections on the Rome production of "The Mechanical Piano" by Nikita Mikhalkov

"At first I felt like someone who had strayed into a strange home. I was in two minds as to whether to leave or to stay, but gradually I was carried away by the magic. I realized this was real Theatre: you believed what was happening on the stage."

Actor Giorgio Albertazzi shared his impressions immediately after the premiere of "The Mechanical Piano." He was not the only person to have been won over by the play. The ovation lasted fifteen minutes. The audience was applauding Marcello Mastroianni's sensitive performance as Platonov, and the actresses Delia Boccardo and Claudia Giannotti, who played Sophia and Anna Petrovna. They applauded Nikita Mikhalkov, who was directing his first stage play.

"On the stage, you are still a film maker, Nikita," Federico Fellini told the director. "Perhaps you have overloaded the production with effects and details. But it's extraordinary how you, a Russian director working in a strange country with Italian actors, have been able to make the audience feel that the characters are authentically Russian. You have managed to convey the atmosphere, the sweetness and charm of your country."

Italian actors and audiences found they were able to identify with Chekhov's characters and their dramas, especially Platonov, "an intellectual who squandered his talents, a man of his time but also of our tragic age, capable of turning the drama of life into play."

The decor was by Yuri Kuper, who lives in Paris. Contributing to the emotional flavour of the Chekhov production were the poignant melodies of Eduard Artemyev.

Reviewing the play, a critic in the Roman newspaper Il Messaggero recalled Stanislavsky's method, some elements of which he detected in Mikhalkov's production. He wrote that the play demanded concentration from the audience. It is not easy to penetrate the world of Chekhov's characters and feel empathy for all of them, "neither angels nor villains," world-weary, cynical, vacillating, but yearning, according to the director, for a more dignified life for themselves and for others.

Theatre critics in Italy have described "The Mechanical Piano" as a "talented work which gave Italian audiences a chance to see Chekhov's laughter-with-tears."

Unfortunately, we have had no opportunity to compare this assessment with the opinion of Soviet connoisseurs of the theatre and of Chekhov. I have not yet seen any reviews of Roman production in the Soviet press.

In the past we have often sinned by underestimating the aesthetic maturity of the Western audience, its independence and ability to appreciate genuine art. This was a condescending attitude: if they don't want to see our plays and don't read our books, then they are insensitive to true art and want to see nothing but banality, pornography and violence.

Italians queued up for tickets to "The Mechanical Piano" from early morning, although they had been told that all the tickets had been sold out. People came from other cities. I don't remember anything like it in the four years I've been working in Rome.

Nikita Mikhalkov at a rehearsal in Rome.

Some reproach Nikita Mikhalkov: "His Rome production is not real Chekhov." But even if it were true that Chekhov as interpreted by Mikhalkov is not everybody's Chekhov, it does not follow that we should ignore the work of a Russian director abroad.

Giovanni Raboni, of the Milan newspaper Corriere della Sera, noted: "It seems to me that Mikhalkov has put into his stage experiment the whole energy of his love for Chekhov and the great literary tradition of his country that every Russian carries in his blood. He has the courage and audacity of a neophyte."

The risks for Nikita Mikhalkov were great. He was risking his reputation as a talented film director, almost all whose films are known in the West.

Why do we turn a deaf ear to a Russian's success in the West? Our press has massively ignored "The Mechanical Piano."

The time has come to ask ourselves, do we or do we not want Soviet films and plays to be seen in the West?

Nikita Mikhalkov has won a huge audience in the West. His film "Dark Eyes" was a box-office hit in Italy. It was shown at fewer cinemas and over a shorter period than American films and yet it was seen by more people.

The premiere of "The Mechanical Piano" was attended by the President of the Senate, the Italian Minister of Culture, and leaders of the Italian Communist Party. It is a pity that no one from the Soviet Ministry of Culture or the State Committee of Cinematograhy were present at the premiere of the play.

It is possible that some people may not share Nikita Mikhalkov's approach to art, or disagree with his interpretation. But a Russian phenomenon that has been a milestone in another country's culture should not be ignored.

To explain Nikita's success in the West in terms of allegedly low standards there and pandering to Western taste would amount to a self-deception that camouflages helplessness and fear of novelty and risk.

Incidentally, Nikita has donated his royalties for the play to the Soviet Culture Foundation.

PAVEL NEGOITSA
our own correspondent
Rome

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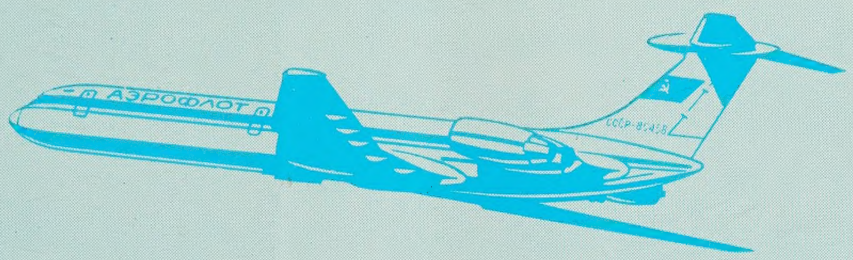

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